三国志 45

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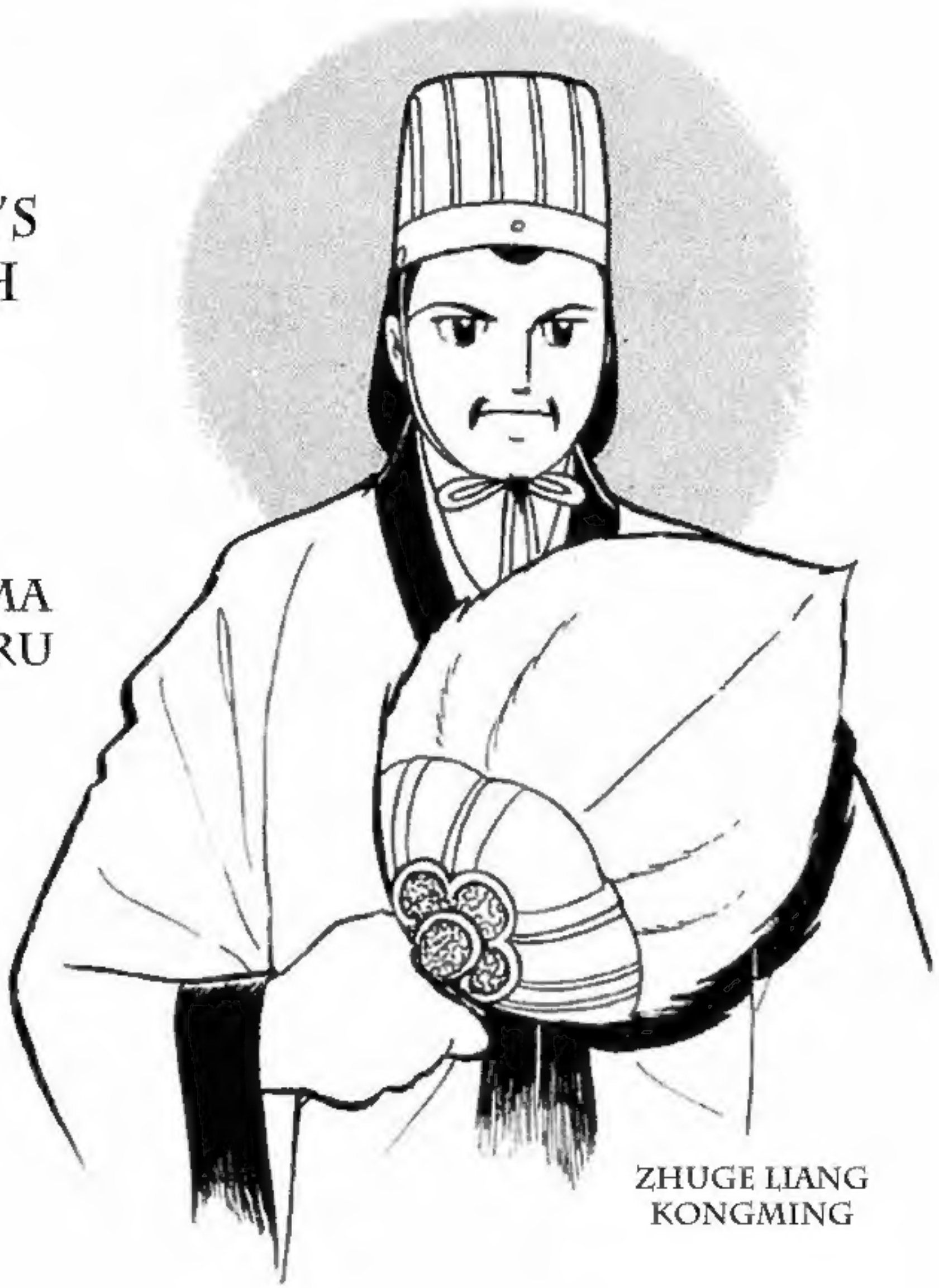
希望コミックス 136

SANGOKUSHI

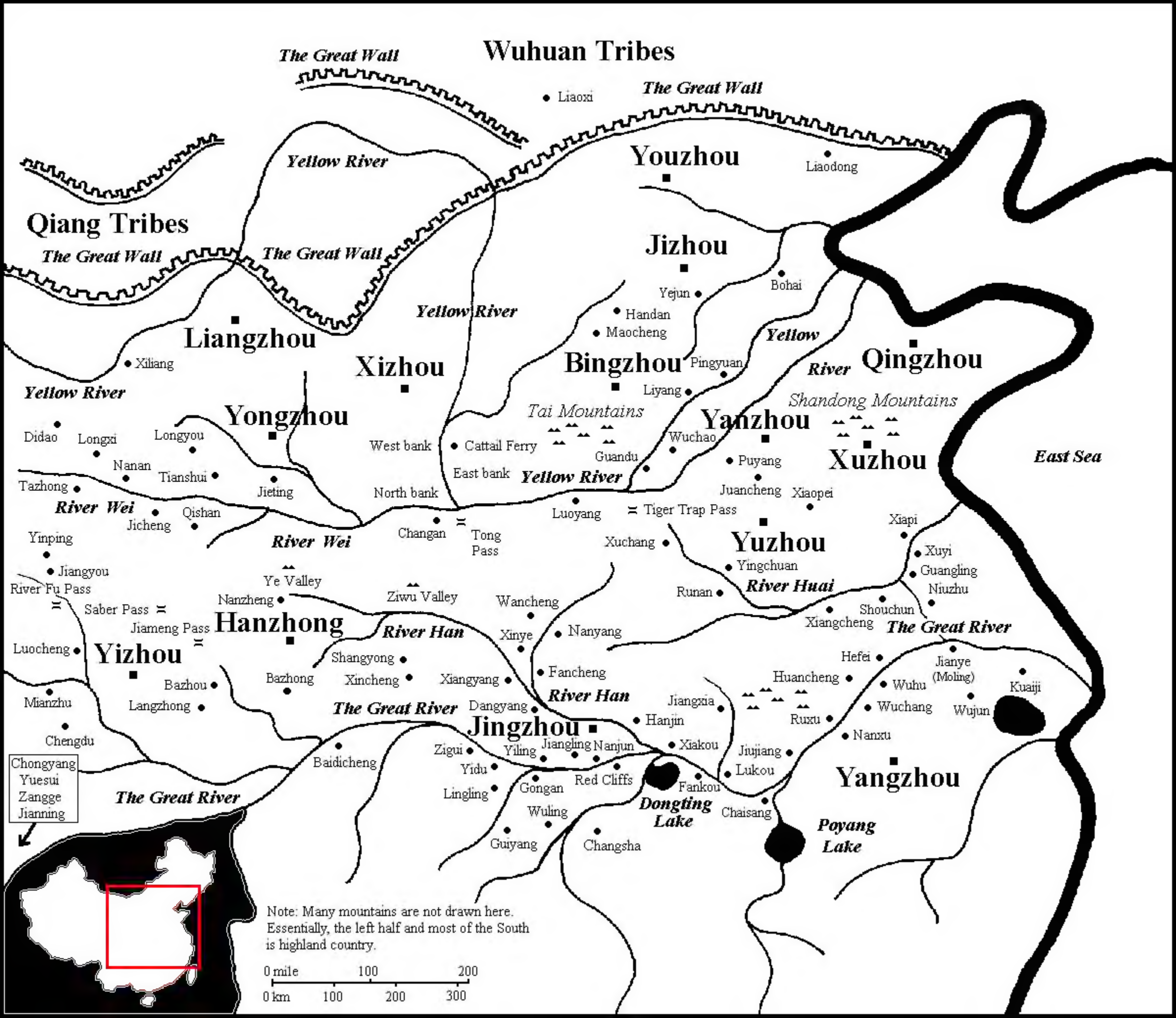
45

LIU BEI'S DEATH

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU



ZHUGE LIANG
KONGMING


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

MAJOR CHARACTERS OF SANGOKUSHI

CAI MAO:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU BIAO, WHO BECAME THE SUPREME ADMIRAL OF WEI'S NAVY WHEN JINGZHOU SURRENDERED TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 25, HE IS FRAMED BY ZHOU YU'S PLOT AND THUS EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. RISES TO BECOME KING OF WEI BUT DECLINES TO BECOME EMPEROR HIMSELF. PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS IN VOLUME 42.

CAO HONG:
YOUNGER COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL.

CAO PI:
ELDEST SON OF CAO CAO. SUCCEEDS TO KING OF WEI AFTER HIS FATHER'S DEATH AND SOON DETHRONES THE LAST HAN EMPEROR TO BECOME AN EMPEROR OF A NEW DYNASTY.

CAO REN:
COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL. PORTRAYED AS BRAVE BUT HOT-TEMPERED IN THE STORY.

CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.

CHENG YU:
IMPORTANT AND LOYAL STRATEGIST SERVING CAO CAO.

CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.

DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.

DIAO CHAN:
A MAID TO WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.

DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.

DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.

EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS AND SHE ROSE TO BECOME THE EMPRESS, UTILIZING RUTHLESS MEANS. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY DONG ZHUO WHEN HE CAME TO POWER.

FA ZHENG:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG, BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI DURING HIS CONQUEST OF SHU. HE IS ONE OF LIU BEI'S KEY STRATEGISTS.

GAN NING:
FORMER-PIRATE WHO IS NOW A FIRECE GENERAL OF WU.

GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING, WHO WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO FOR KILLING HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

GUAN PING:
GUAN YU'S ADOPTED SON AS OF VOLUME 19. SERVES ALONGSIDE HIS FATHER UNTIL THEIR DEATH IN VOLUME 42.

GUAN XING:
GUAN YU'S SECOND SON, WHO BECOMES A PROMINENT SHU OFFICER AFTER HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. AFTER THE FAILED SIEGE ON FANCHENG, HE IS EVENTUALLY CAUGHT BY WU FORCES AND PROMPTLY EXECUTED IN VOLUME 42.

GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

HE JIN:
ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER ROSE TO BECOME EMPRESS HE. HE IS KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS DURING THEIR POWER STRUGGLE IN VOLUME 3.

HUANG GAI:
LOYAL GENERAL OF WU, WHOSE FAMILY HAS SERVED THE SUN FAMILY FOR THREE GENERATIONS.

HUANG ZHONG:
AN ELDERLY WARRIOR GENERAL RENOWNED ESPECIALLY FOR HIS SKILL WITH THE BOW. FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT DEFECTS TO LIU BEI IN VOLUME 28. FALLS IN BATTLE AGAINST WU FORCES IN VOLUME 43.

HUA XIN:
WEI MINISTER WHO RISES TO BECOME CHANCELLOR OF WEI UNDER CAO PI'S REIGN.

JIANG QIN:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.

JIA XU:
FORMER STRATEGIST OF ZHANG XIU, WHO PLOTTED A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, WHICH LEFT DIAN WEI DEAD. AS OF VOLUME 16, HE HAS DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR.

LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.

LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU BETRAYS THEM.

LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO SICKNESS IN VOLUME 22 AND THE CONSEQUENT SUCCESSION CRISIS ALLOWS CAO CAO TO TAKE OVER JINGZHOU.

LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A VIRTUOUS MAN, WHO CLAIMS DESCENT FROM EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI. HE BECOMES AN EMPEROR AND ESTABLISHES A SUCCESOR-DYNASTY TO HAN IN VOLUME 43.

LIU FENG:
LIU BEI'S ADOPTED SON. ORIGINALLY THE NEPHEW OF LIU MI, HE WAS ADOPTED UPON FIRST SIGHT BY LIU BEI WHO TOOK A LIKING TO HIM IN VOLUME 21. HE IS UNFORTUNATELY EXECUTED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 43 AFTER DENYING AID TO GUAN YU.

LIU QI:
ELDEST SON OF LIU BIAO WHO TEMPORARILY LOSES HIS INHERITANCE OF JINGZHOU DUE TO CAI MAO'S PLOT. IN VOLUME 29, HE PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS AND THE RIGHTFUL OWNERSHIP OF JINGZHOU CONTINUES TO BE DEBATED BETWEEN SUN QUAN AND LIU BEI.

LIU ZHANG:
INCOMPETENT RULER OF SHU (ALTERNATIVE NAME FOR YIZHOU). HE SEEKS LIU BEI'S HELP TO FEND OFF ZHANG LU, BUT RELATIONS SOON SOUR AND LIU BEI USURPS HIS RULE OVER SHU. AS OF VOLUME 35, HE IS EXILED TO JINGZHOU.

LU BU:
ALTHOUGH REPUTED TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR, HE IS HOT-HEADED AND RARELY HEEDS WISE ADVICE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES, AND EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

LU MENG:
FIRECE WU GENERAL, WHO AT LAST CONQUERS JINGZHOU FOR SUN QUAN, CAPTURING GUAN YU IN DOING SO. UNFORTUNATELY DIES TO A SUDDEN ILLNESS AFTER GUAN YU'S EXECUTION IN VOLUME 42, CAUSING SOME TO THINK HE WAS CURSED.

LU SU:
IMPORTANT MILITARY GENERAL AND ADVISOR OF WU.

LU XUN:
TALENTED WU OFFICIAL WHO QUICKLY RISES TO FAVOUR AFTER SUCCESSFULLY PLANNING THE CONQUEST OF JINGZHOU.

MA CHAO:
A FIERCE WARRIOR WHO SEEKS TO AVENGE HIS FATHER MA TENG'S DEATH AT CAO CAO'S HANDS. IN VOLUME 35, HE ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE AND BECOMES ONE OF HIS MOST VALUABLE GENERALS.

MA DAI:
A NEPHEW OF MA CHAO WHO ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE ALONGSIDE HIS UNCLE.

MA LIANG:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS. HE IS THE FOURTH YOUNGEST OF THE FIVE MA BROTHERS, AND IS NOTED FOR HIS INTELLECT AND WHITE EYEBROWS.

MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIANG AND FATHER OF MA CHAO, WHO SIGNED THE BLOOD-PLEDGE TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 30, HE IS EXECUTED FOR A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT OF CAO CAO.

MENG DA:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG WHO DEFECTS TO LIU BEI, ALONG WITH HIS GOOD FRIENDS ZHANG SONG AND FA ZHENG. HE LATER DEFECTS TO WEI IN VOLUME 43, AFTER REALIZING HE WOULD BE KILLED IN SHU TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR GUAN YU'S DEATH.

MI ZHU:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS.

PANG DE:
FIERCE GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED MA TENG AND THEN MA CHAO. IN VOLUME 36, HE DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SERVICE DUE TO A TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP WITH ZHANG LU, THE LORD OF HANZHONG. PERISHES IN THE BATTLE OF FANCHENG AGAINST GUAN YU IN VOLUME 41.

PANG TONG SHIYUAN:
NICKNAMED THE YOUNG PHOENIX (FENGCHU), HE IS A MASTERFUL STRATEGIST SAID TO BE ZHUGE LIANG'S EQUAL. AFTER ENTERING LIU BEI'S SERVICE, HE TRAGICALLY MET AN EARLY DEATH IN SHU WHEN AMBUSHED BY ZHANG REN IN VOLUME 34.

SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.

SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN, WHO TURNS THE SUN FAMILY'S FORTUNE AROUND WITH HIS CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH-LANDS. IN VOLUME 19, A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AND CONFLICT WITH YU JI CAUSES HIS BODY AND MENTAL HEALTH TO WEAKEN. HE SUCCUMBS TO DEATH SHORTLY AFTER.

SUN JIAN:
THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. HOWEVER, HIS ALLIES LIU BIAO AND YUAN SHAO TO TURN ON HIM WHEN HE TRIES TO KEEP THE IMPERIAL SEAL FOR HIMSELF. IN VOLUME 7, HE IS KILLED IN BATTLE AGAINST YUAN SHAO.

SUN QIAN:
TRUSTED ADVISOR TO LIU BEI. (HIS ROLE IS MUCH SMALLER IN SANGOKUSHI COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL NOVEL.)

SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE AND THE CURRENT RULER OF WU, THE SOUTHLANDS OF CHINA.

TAISHI CI:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU YAO BUT DEFECTED TO SUN CE IN VOLUME 11. DURING THE BATTLE OF HEFEI (VOL. 29), HE FALLS PREY TO ZHANG LIAO'S PLAN AND IS KILLED IN BATTLE.

TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG. UPON HIS DEATH, HE BEQUEATHS XUZHOU TO LIU BEI.

THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY WERE KILLED DURING THE POWER STRUGGLE WITH HE JIN IN VOLUME 4.

WANG YUN:
THE MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN THE IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHAN IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

WEI YAN:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT HAS DEFECTED TO LIU BEI ALONG WITH HUANG ZHONG IN VOLUME 28.

WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.

XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.

XU CHU:
TRUSTED BODYGUARD OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.

XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. AFTER A BRIEF STINT OF SERVICE TO LIU BEI, HE IS TRICKED INTO COMING TO XUCHANG AND SERVING CAO CAO (VOLUME 21).

XUN YU:
TALENTED ADVISOR TO CA CAO.

XU HUANG:
CALM AND COLLECTED GENERAL UNDER SERVICE TO CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.

YAN YAN:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU ZHANG BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI AFTER HIS CAPTURE AT ZHANG FEI'S HANDS IN VOLUME 34. HE IS NOTED FOR HIS ENERGY DESPITE HIS OLD AGE.

YU JIN:
GENERAL SERVING CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YUAN SHAO:
OLDER BROTHER OF YUAN SHU AND THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU. AFTER MANY YEARS OF WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO FOR CONTROL OF NORTHERN CHINA, HE AND HIS FAMILY ARE DEFEATED.

YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.

ZHANG BAO:
ELDEST SON OF ZHANG FEI, WHO RISES TO PROMINENCE AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU. HIS TEMPER EVENTUALLY GETS THE BETTER OF HIM, WHEN HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS SUBORDINATES IN VOLUME 43.

ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.

ZHANG LU:
THE LEADER OF THE CELESTIAL MASTERS TAOIST MOVEMENT, AND THE RULER OF HANZHONG. IN VOLUME 36, CAO CAO CONQUERS HANZHONG BUT SPARES ZHANG LU.

ZHANG REN:
ONE OF SHU'S MOST CAPABLE GENERALS WHO PLANNED THE AMBUSH THAT KILLED PANG TONG. HE REFUSED TO SERVE LIU BEI UNLIKE MANY OF HIS COMRADES AND WAS THUS EXECUTED WHEN FINALLY CAPTURED AT THE HANDS OF ZHUGE LIANG (VOLUME 35).

ZHANG SONG:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU ZHANG WHO, UPON FAILING TO MAKE AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN CAO CAO AND LIU ZHANG, SOUGHT LIU BEI'S SUPPORT AND SWITCHED HIS ALLEGIANCE. IN VOLUME 34, HE IS EXECUTED WHEN HIS BROTHER REPORTS HIS BETRAYAL TO LIU ZHANG.

ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER SUBJECT OF YUAN SHAO BUT LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE BECOMES ONE OF LIU BEI'S MOST TRUSTED GENERALS.

ZHOU TAI:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

ZHANG ZHAO:
ELDER STATESMAN AND SUN QUAN'S TRUSTED ADVISOR. HE ORIGINALLY ENTERED SUN CE'S SERVICE ALONG WITH ZHANG HONG, WITH WHOM HE WAS REFERRED TO AS THE "TWO ZHANGS."

ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE. COMMITS SUICIDE AFTER LEARNING GUAN YU WAS EXECUTED IN VOLUME 42.

ZHOU YU GONGJIN:
SWORN BROTHER OF SUN CE, AND ONE OF WU'S TOP MINDS, SERVING AS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DURING THE BATTLE OF THE RED CLIFFS. HE RECEIVES A CRITICAL ARROW-WOUND DURING HIS NANJUN CAMPAIGN (VOL. 27) WHICH HE NEVER FULLY RECOVERS FROM, LEADING TO HIS TRAGIC EARLY DEATH IN VOLUME 30.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING:
MASTERFUL STRATEGIST AND FORMER STUDENT OF SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 21, HE YIELDS TO LIU BEI'S PERSISTENCE AND DECIDES TO BECOME HIS SUBJECT.

SANGOKUSHI (ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志

VOLUME 45
LIU BEI'S DEATH

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LIU BEI DEPARTS 38
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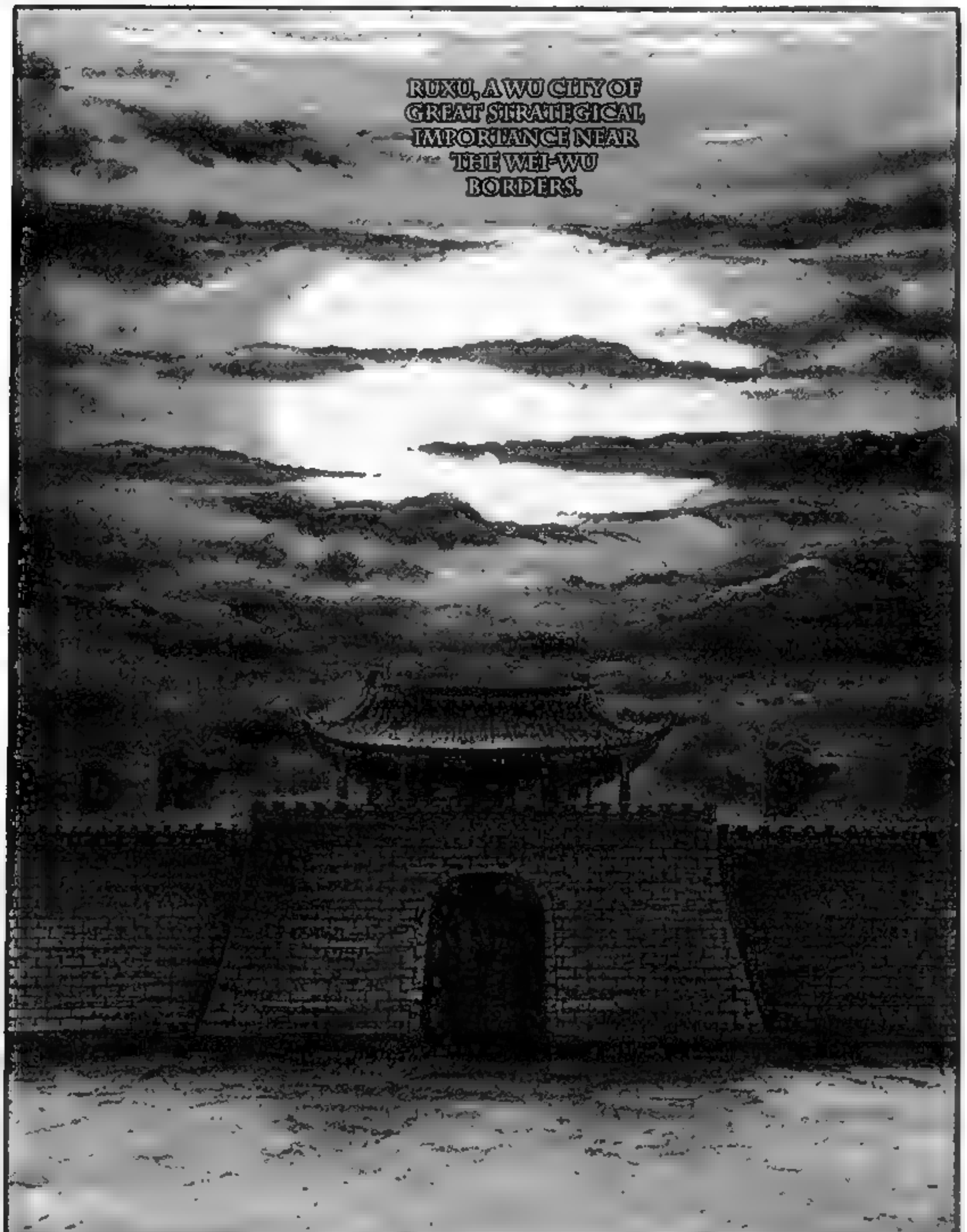
（月刊『コミックトム』掲載）

DEFENCE BY OFFENCE



IT'S DEFENCE WAS ASSIGNED TO ZHU HUAN, A YOUNG MAN OF 27 YEARS BUT HELD IN HIGH REGARD BY SUN QUAN

SO THEY'VE COME.

THE VANGUARD OF THE WEI ARMY HAS BEEN SIGHTED, GENERAL ZHU RAN.

YES, SIR.

HAVE 5000 TROOPS BEEN PLACED AT XIANXI FOR AN AMBUSH AS I ORDERED?

BUT SIR, WE HARDLY HAVE THE NUMBERS TO DEFEND AGAINST SUCH A LARGE ENEMY ARMY. PERHAPS IT WOULD BE WISER TO EITHER MAKE A TACTICAL WITHDRAWAL OR, IF WE MUST HOLD RUXU NO MATTER WHAT, NOT SPLIT UP OUR ALREADY OUTNUMBERED FORCES.

BATTLES ARE NOT DECIDED BY PURE NUMBERS BUT BY THE ABILITIES OF MEN AND THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP.

TO THE NORTH, WE HAVE MOUNTAINS, AND TO THE SOUTH, WE HAVE THE YANGTZE RIVER. REST ASSURED, RUXU WILL NOT BE TAKEN EASILY

THE ENEMIES HAVE MARCHED A LONG WAY UNDER THE SUMMER HEAT AND WILL SURELY BE FATIGUED. MOREOVER, THEIR ADVANTAGE IN NUMBERS IS HAMPERED BY THE PROBLEM OF LOGISTICS. A LONG SIEGE WILL SURELY LEAD TO FOOD SHORTAGES FOR THEM.

NOW PUT DOWN ALL FLAGS AND BANNERS! I WANT ALL GARRISON TROOPS TO BE HIDDEN FROM ENEMY SIGHT!

IN CONTRAST, WE HAVE WELL-RESTED SOLDIERS, THE MOUNTAINS FOR SHADES, AND AMPLE STOCKS OF GRAIN. DO NOT BE DISHEARTENED MEN, FOR IT IS US WHO HOLD THE UPPER HAND IN THIS COMING BATTLE.

YES, SIR...

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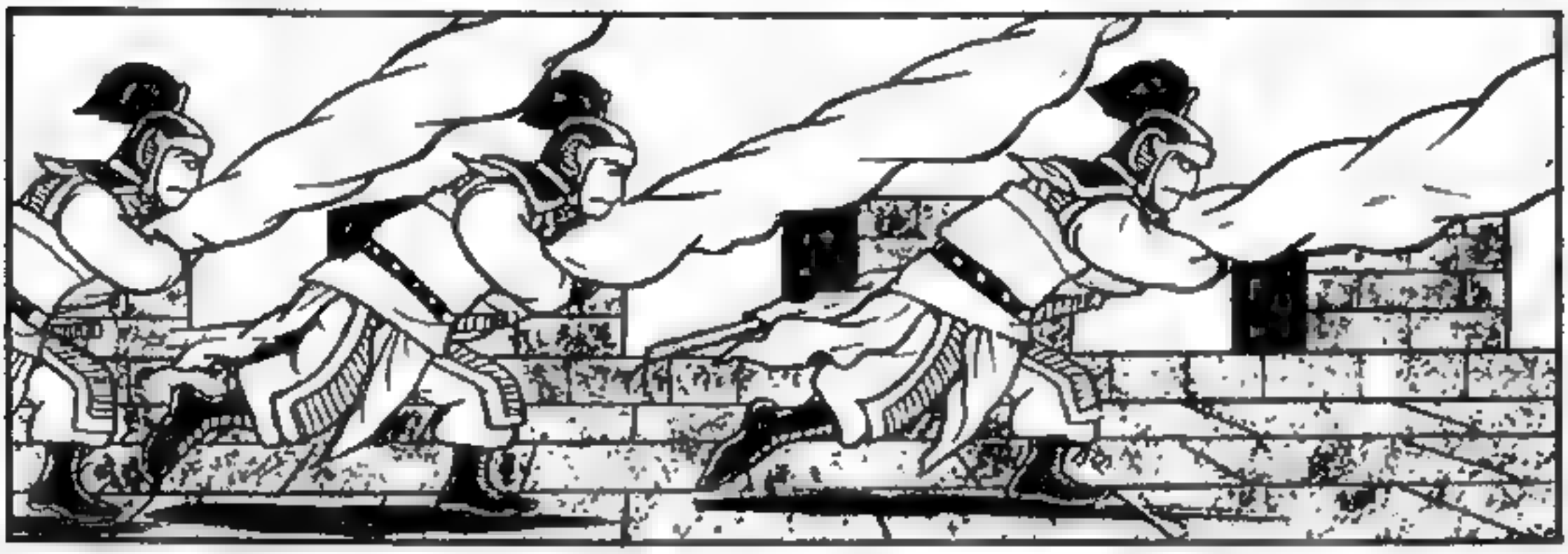
ドシン



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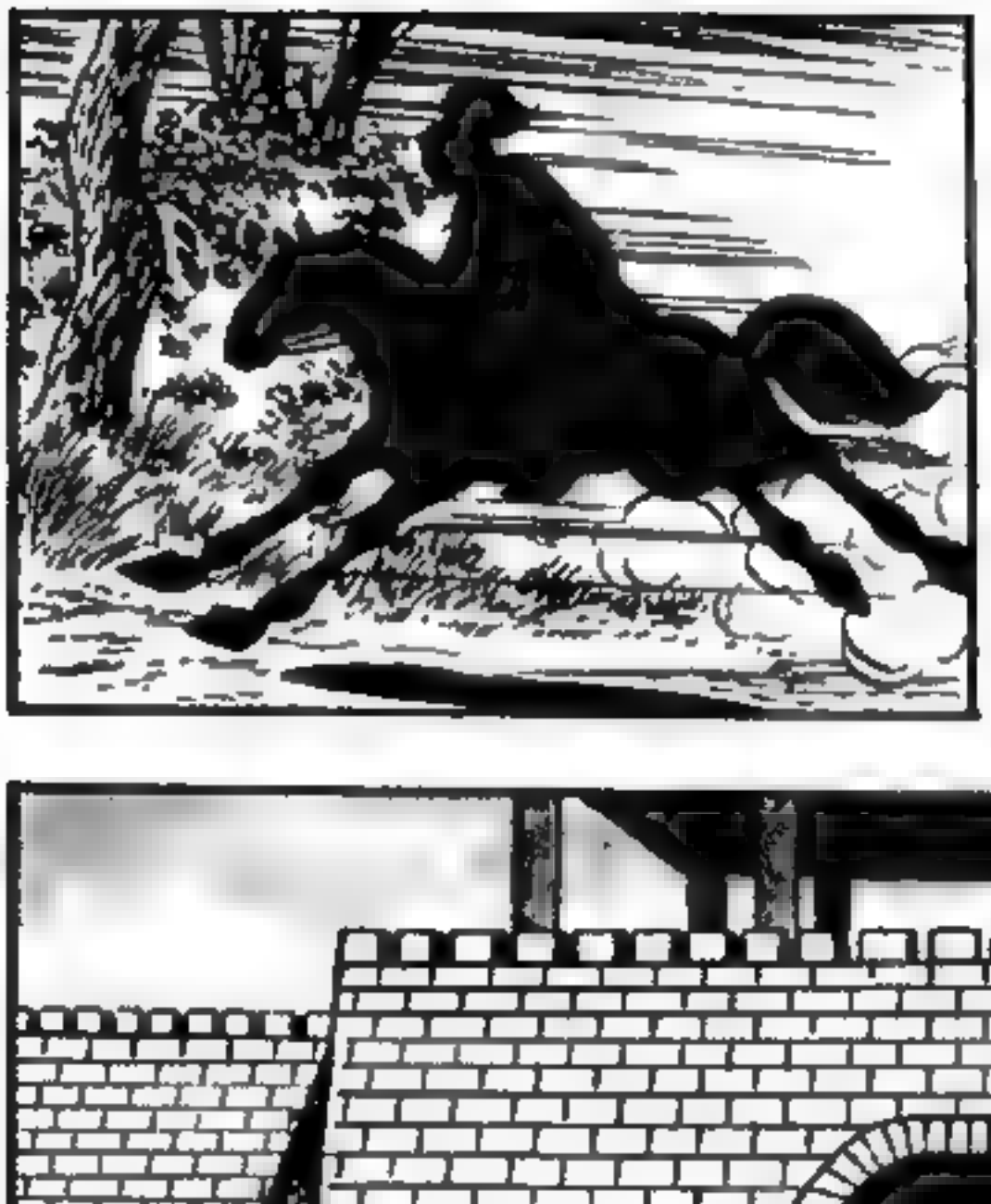
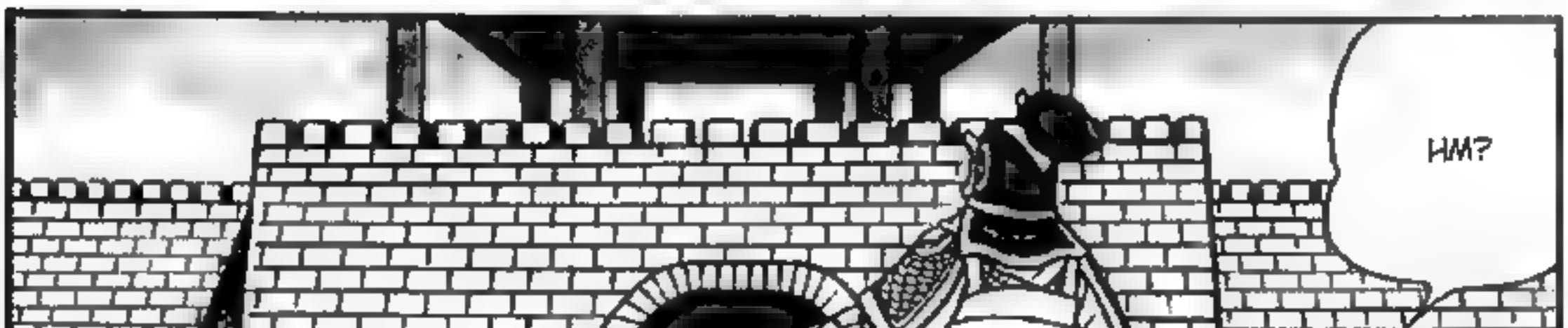
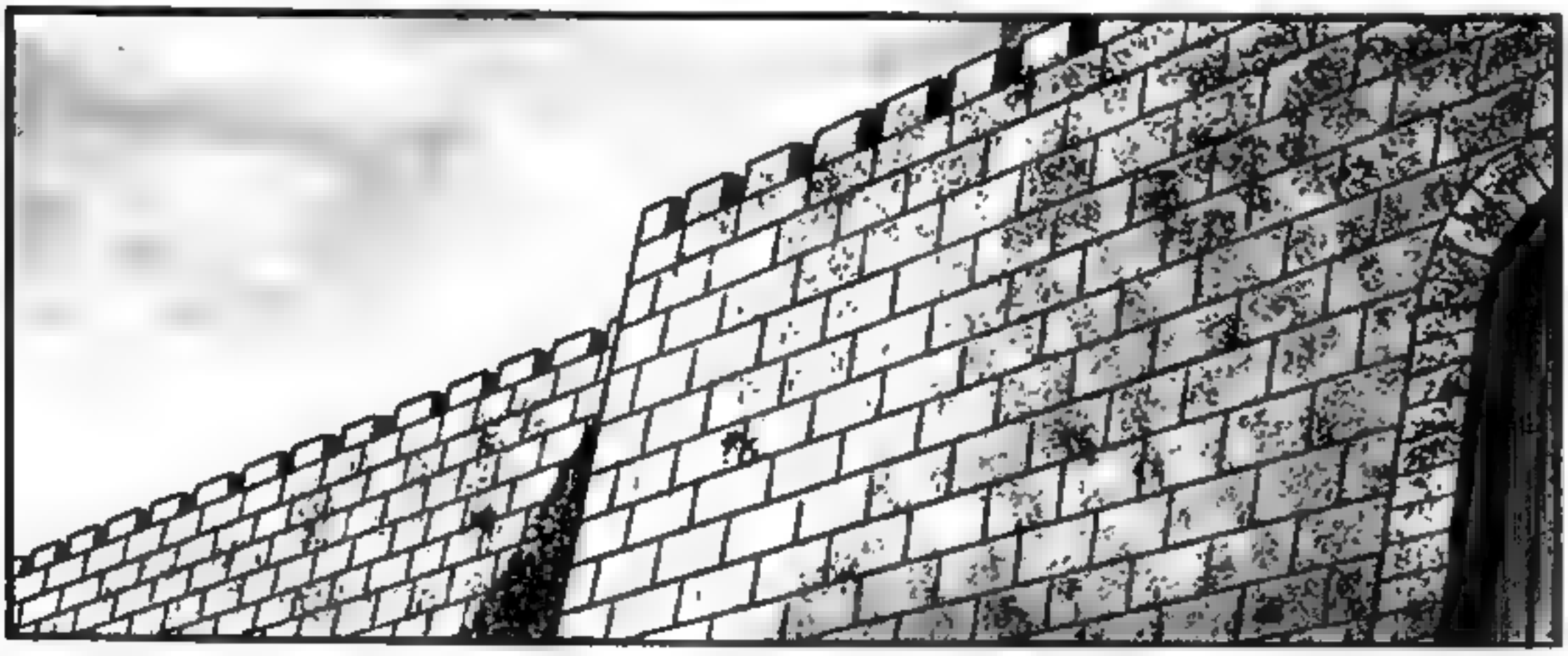
SO THAT IS RUXU...



YES, SIR.
GO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK.


HM?



I DON'T SEE A SINGLE SOLDIER...

HA, THEY MUST'VE FLED AFTER HEARING OUR ADVANCE.

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魏

禾鬼女凡

IT APPEARS THEY'VE FLED BEFORE OUR GREAT NUMBERS.

I COULDN'T SEE A SINGLE FLAG OR SOLDIER'S SHADOW.

COMPLETELY EMPTY?

HM...

LET US SWIFTLY CAPTURE RUXU!

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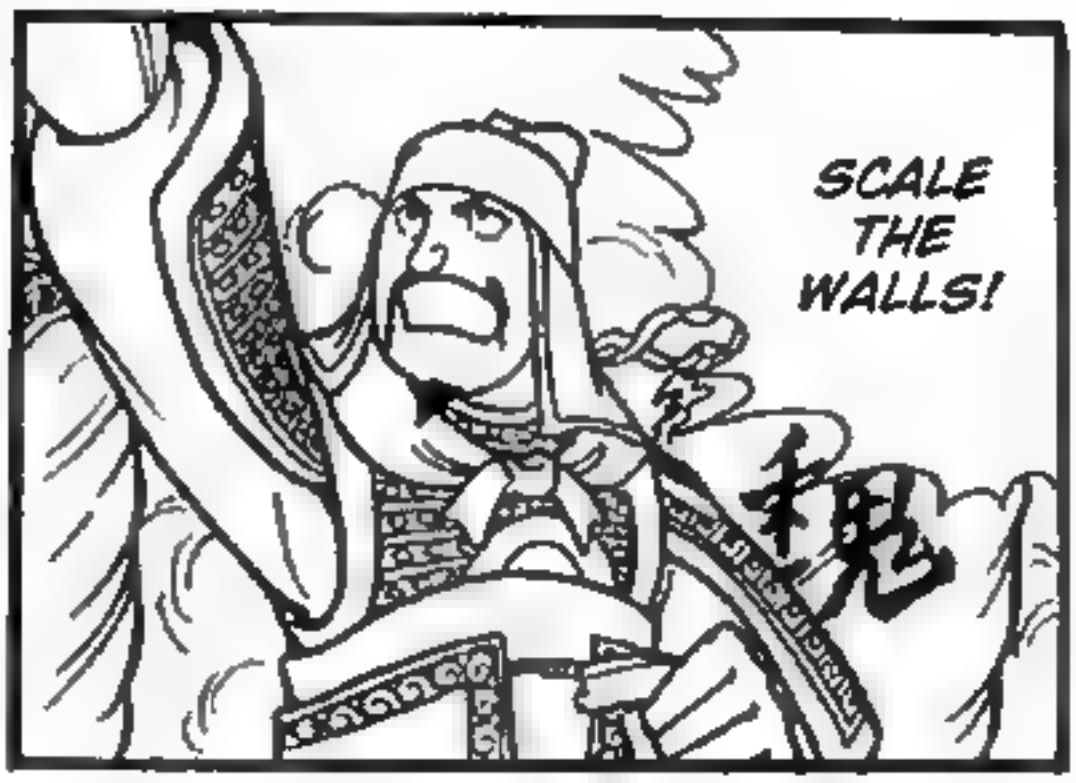
禾鬼女凡

HMM, IT DOES APPEAR ABANDONED.


SCALE THE WALLS!

GOOD.
THEY'VE BEGUN SCALING THE WALLS, SIR.

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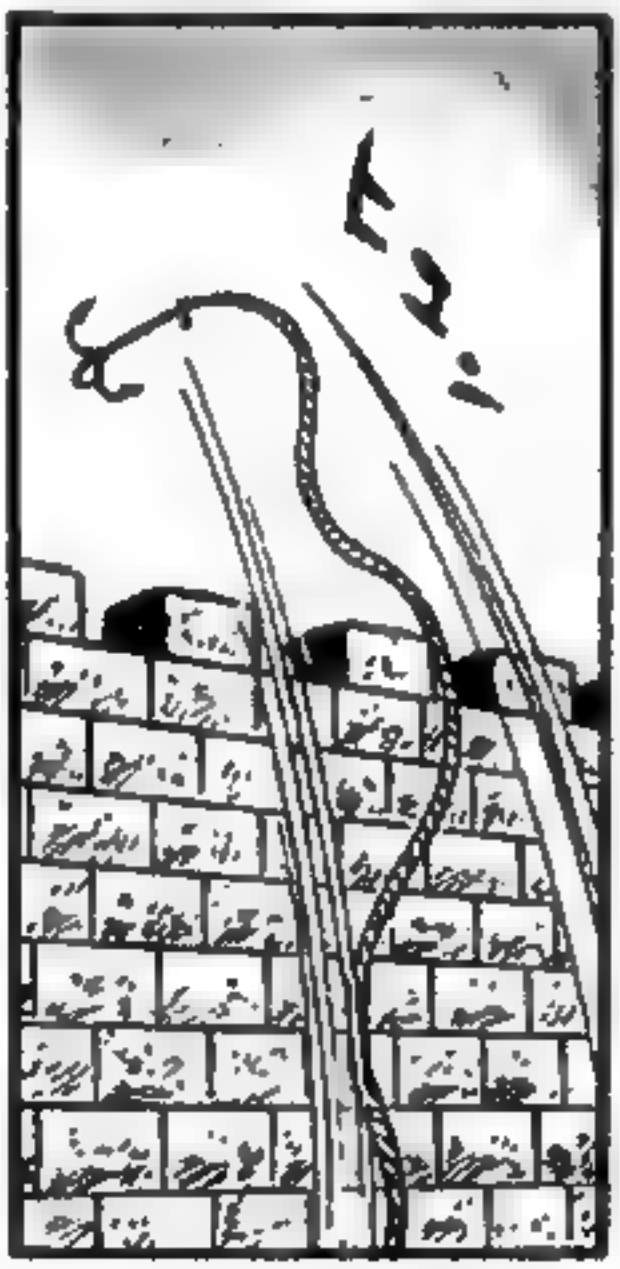
NOW!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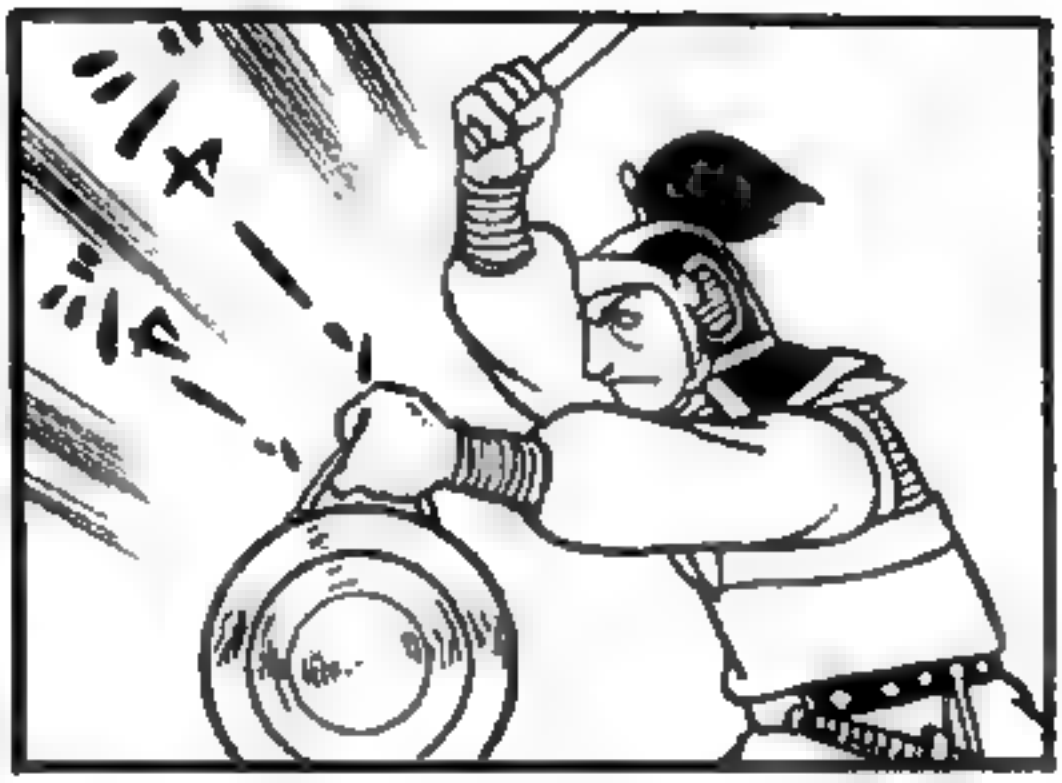
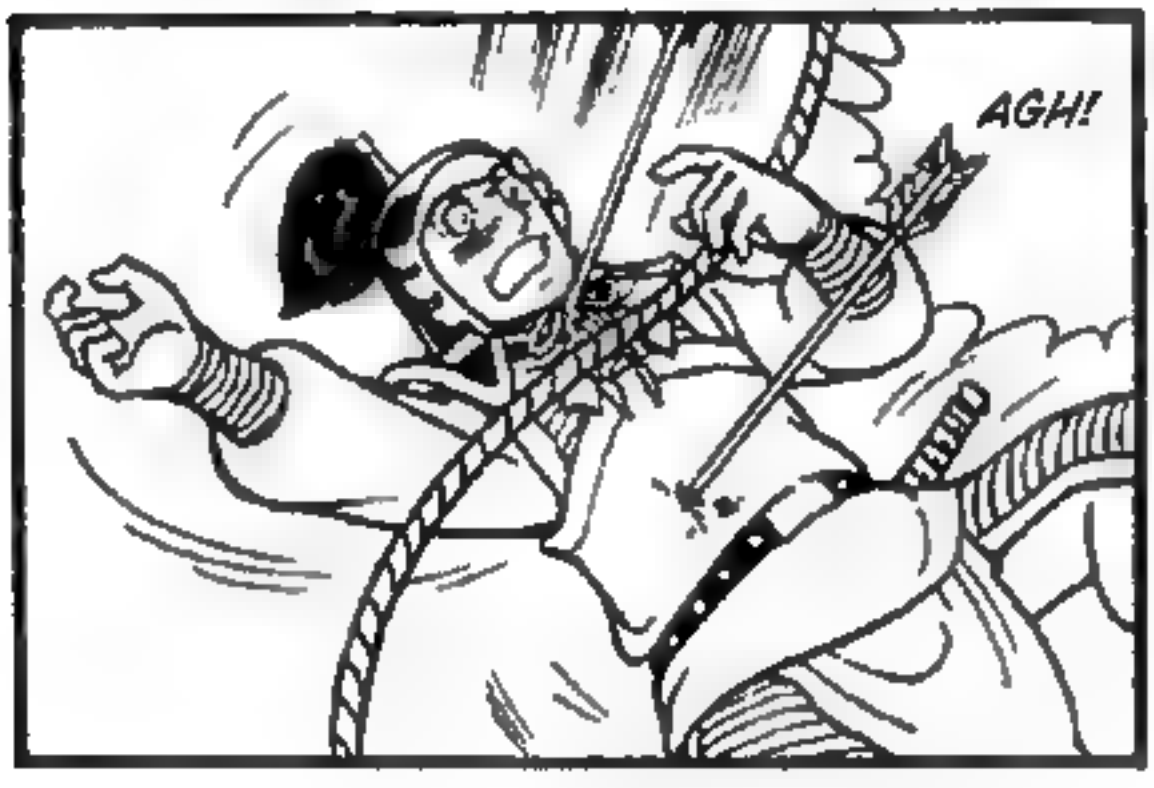
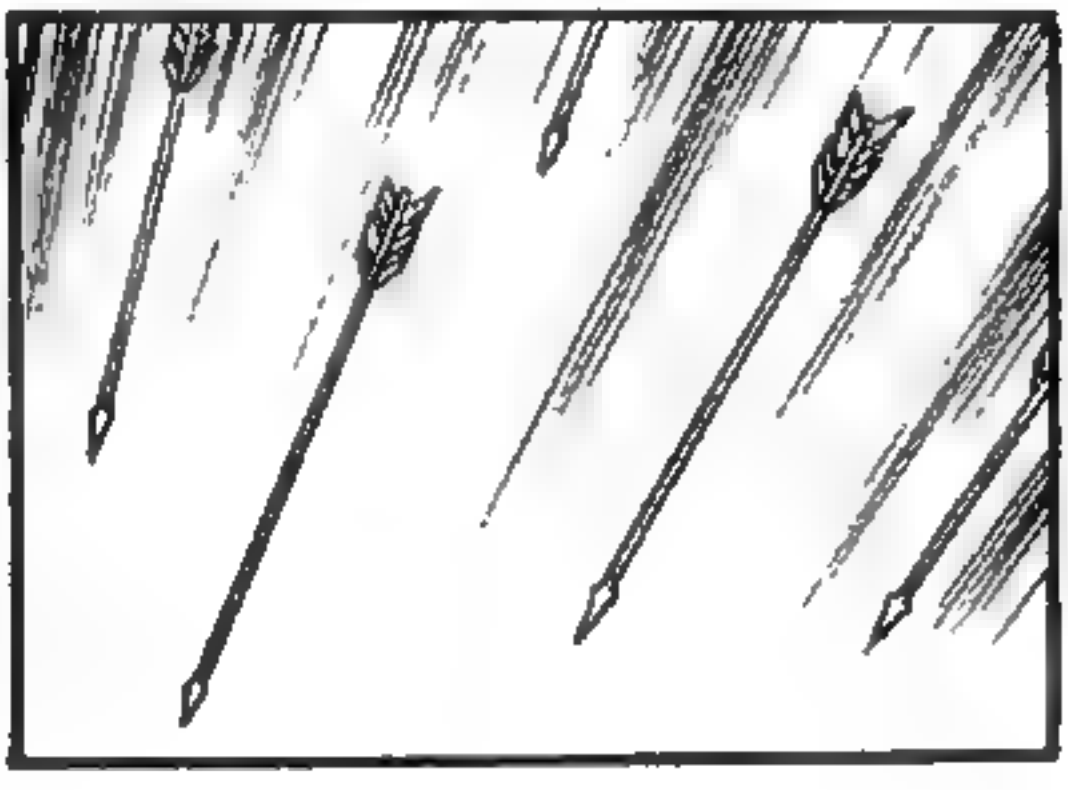
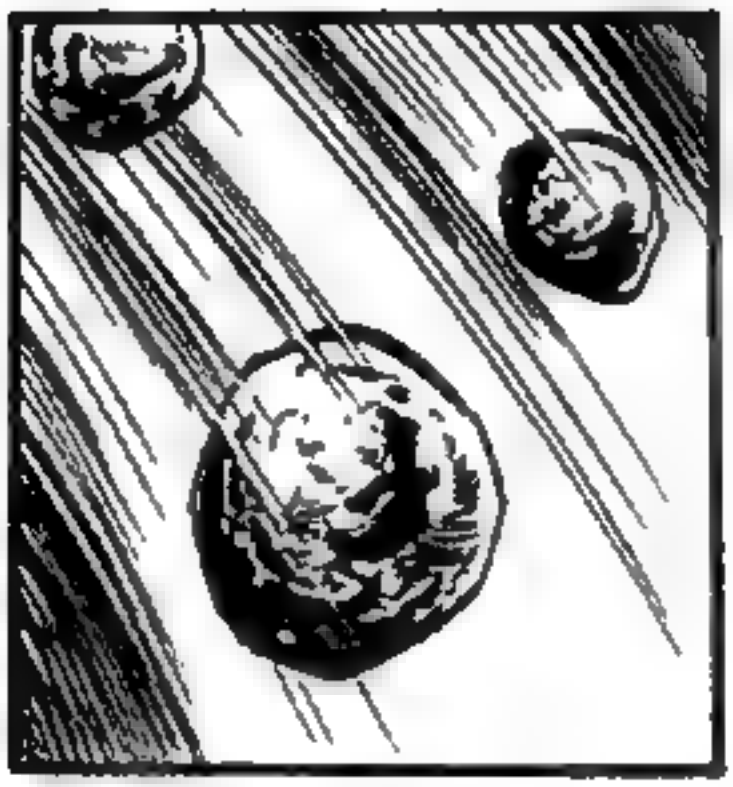


HUH?

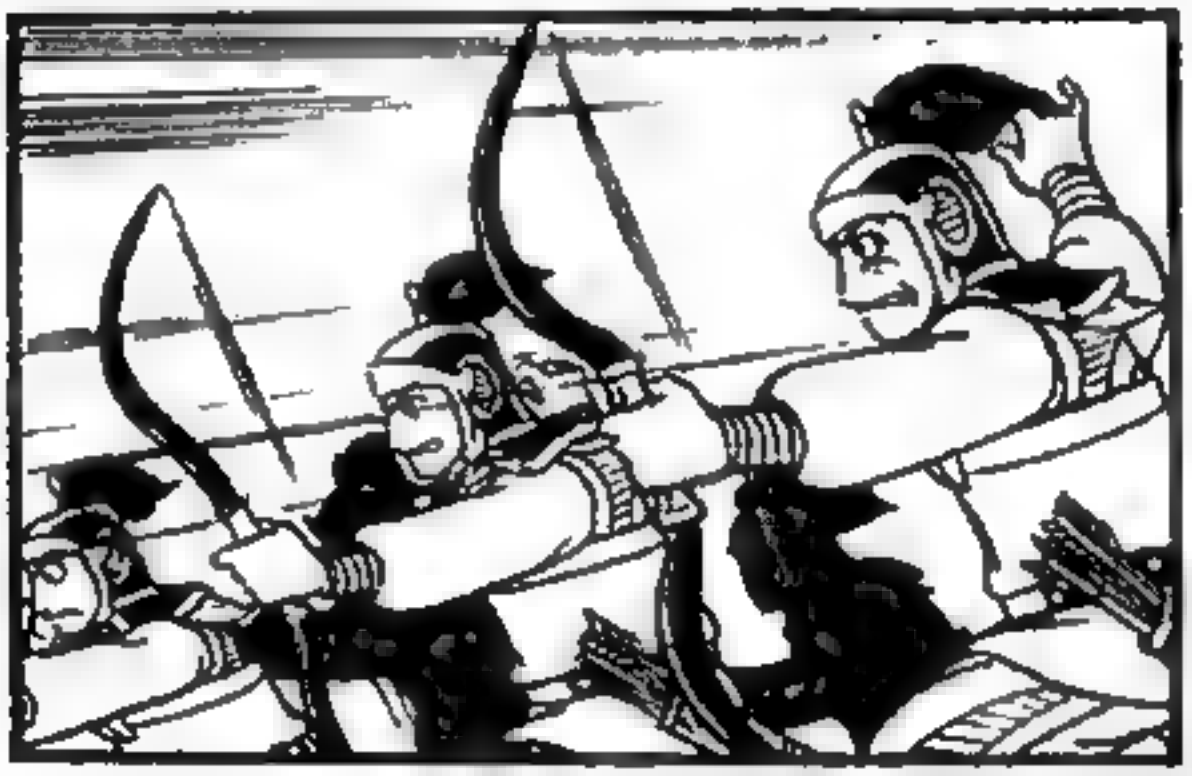

AGH!



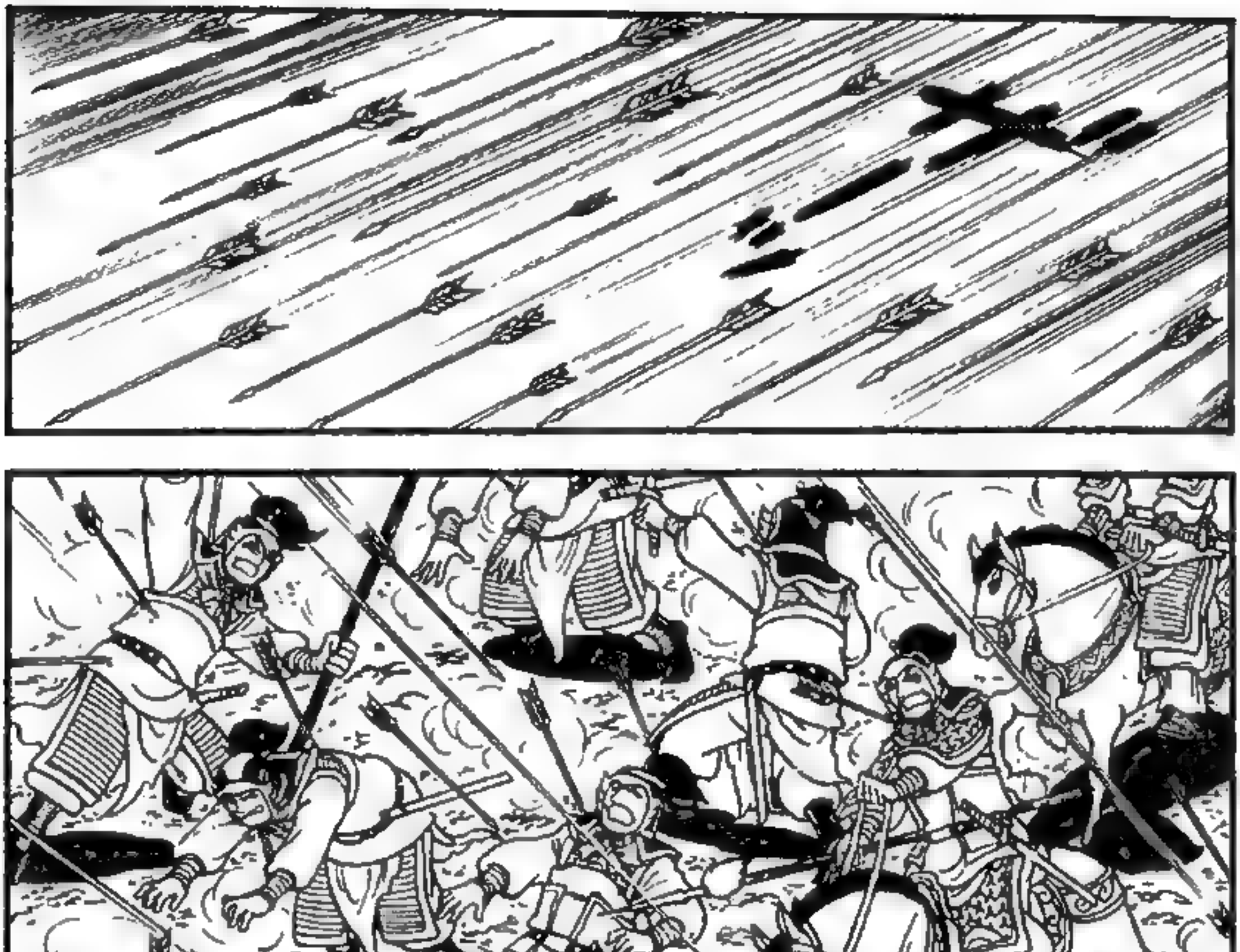


GAHH!

AHH!



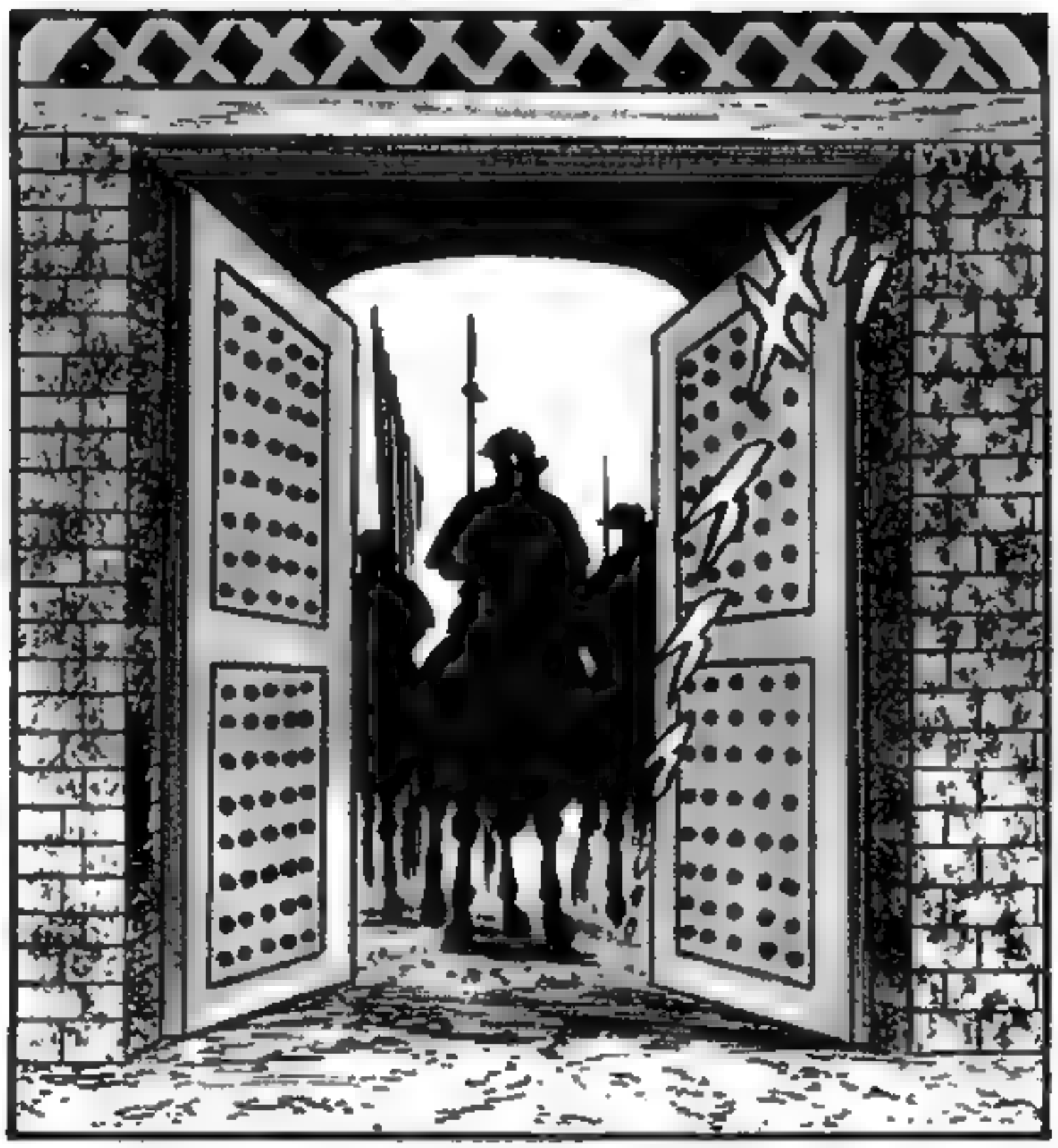
CURSES!
SO THEY
WERE
JUST
HIDING!



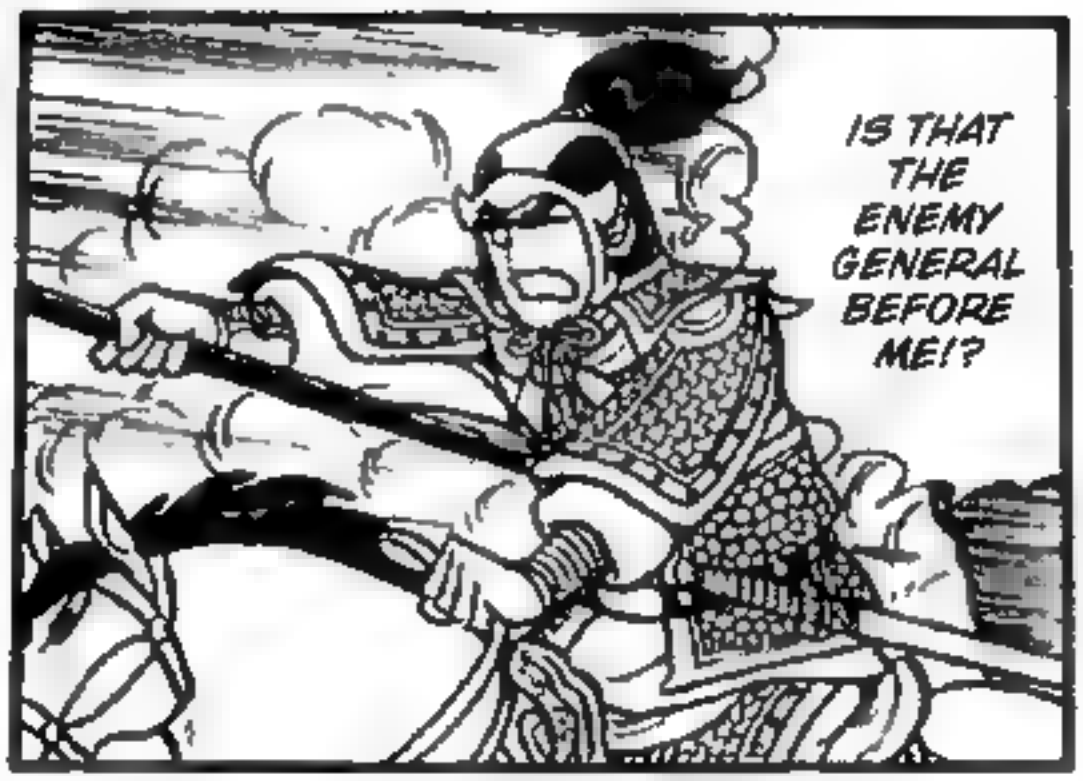
BACK OFF AWAY FROM ENEMY ARROW RANGE!

WITHDRAW! WITHDRAW!

NOW'S OUR CHANCE!



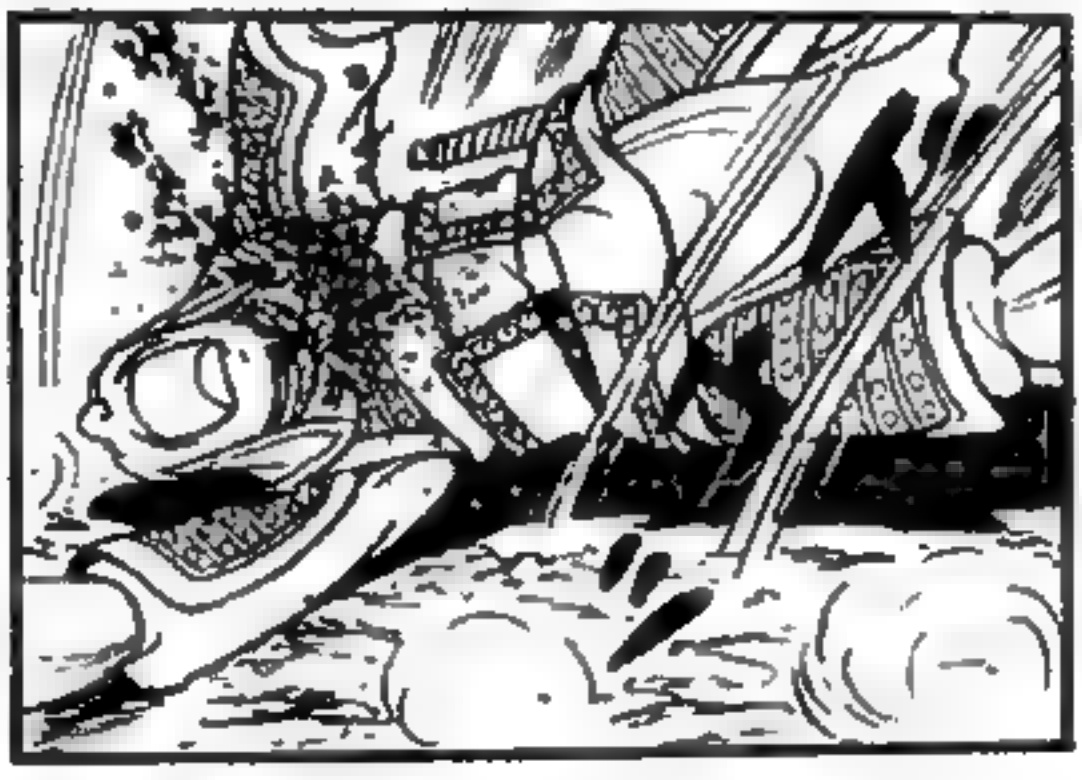
NGH!


IS THAT THE ENEMY GENERAL BEFORE ME!?

GAHH!

DIE!

GENERAL CHANG DIAO!



AHHH!
ACK!

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QUICKLY, MEN! TO RUXU!

YES, AND THEY REQUEST YOUR URGENT AID, GENERAL CAO REN.

OUR VANGUARD IS LOSING!?

HMM?

?
WHAT'S THAT!?

THE 5000 WU SOLDIERS ZHU RAN HAD HIDDEN NOW SPRANG THEIR AMBUSH UPON CAO REN'S FORCES.

CURSES, WE'LL BE PRESSED FROM ENEMIES FROM THE REAR AND FRONT!

FROM OUR REAR!?

IT'S AN ENEMY AMBUSH, SIR!

RETREAT! RETREAT!

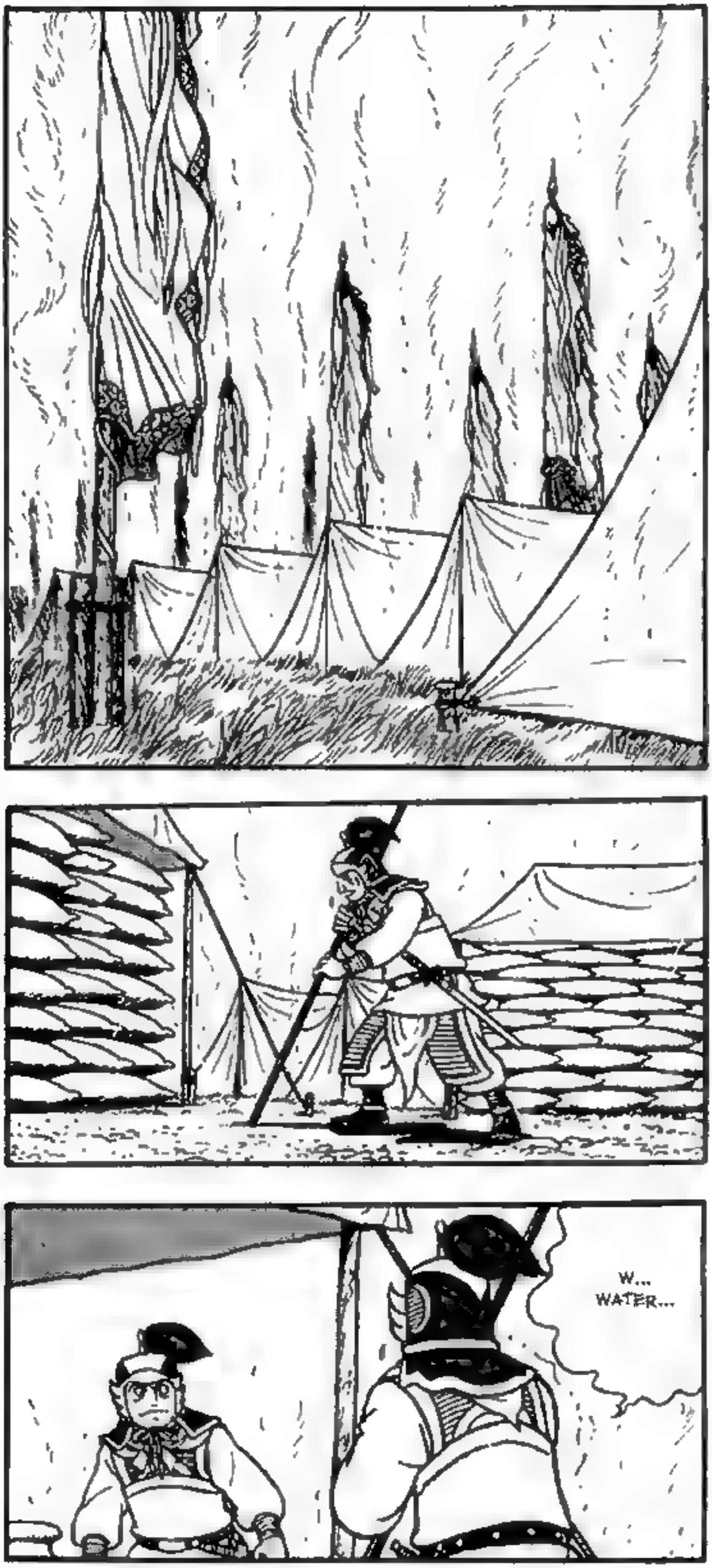
WE'RE IN UTTER DISARRAY AS MOST OF OUR TROOPS WERE STILL IN MARCHING FORMATION!

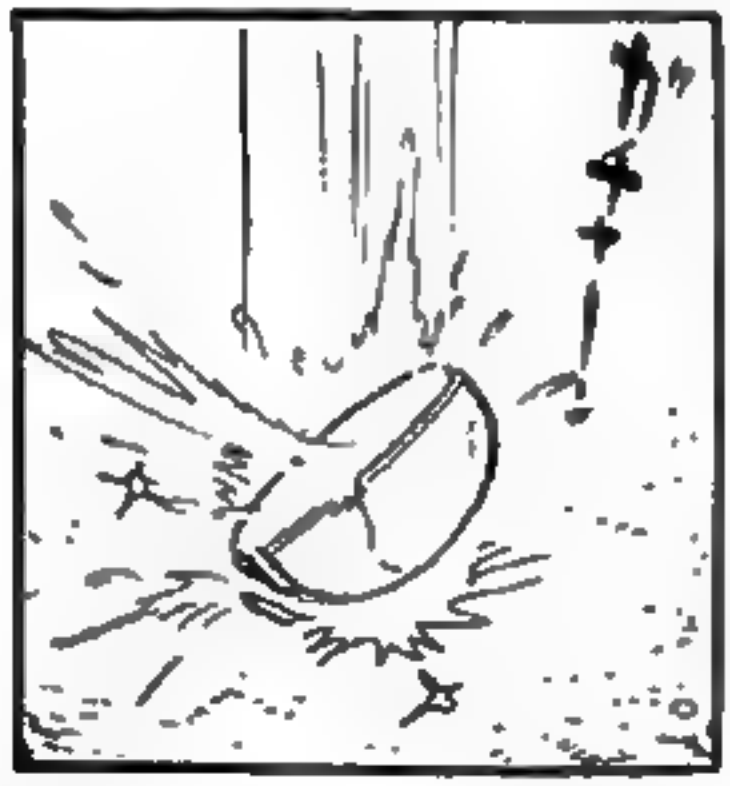
WE MUST WITHDRAW AND REGROUP!

THERE IS NOTHING MORE PITIFUL IN BATTLE THAN A SURPRISED AND DISORDERED ARMY

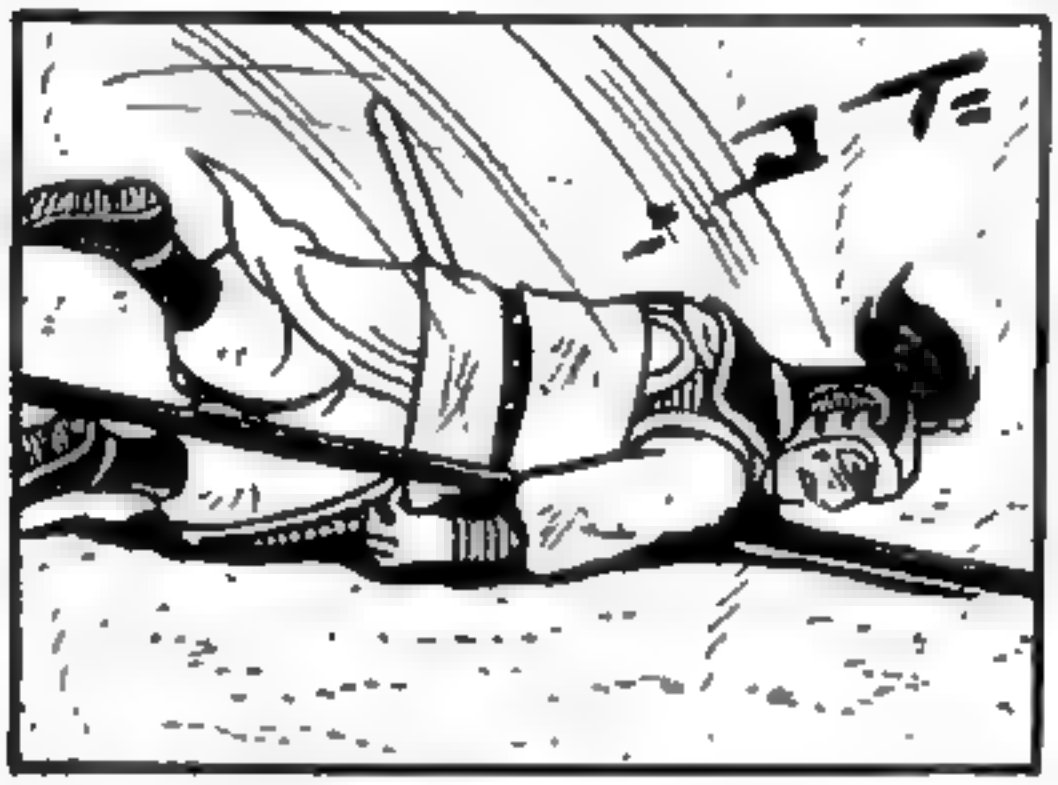
魏
CAO REN'S ARMY TOOK HEAVY CASUALTIES AS THEY BEAT A HASTY RETREAT

THE WU FORCES CAPTURED A STUNNING NUMBER OF WEI WAGONS CARRYING ARMS ARMOUR, AND FOOD


W...
WATER...

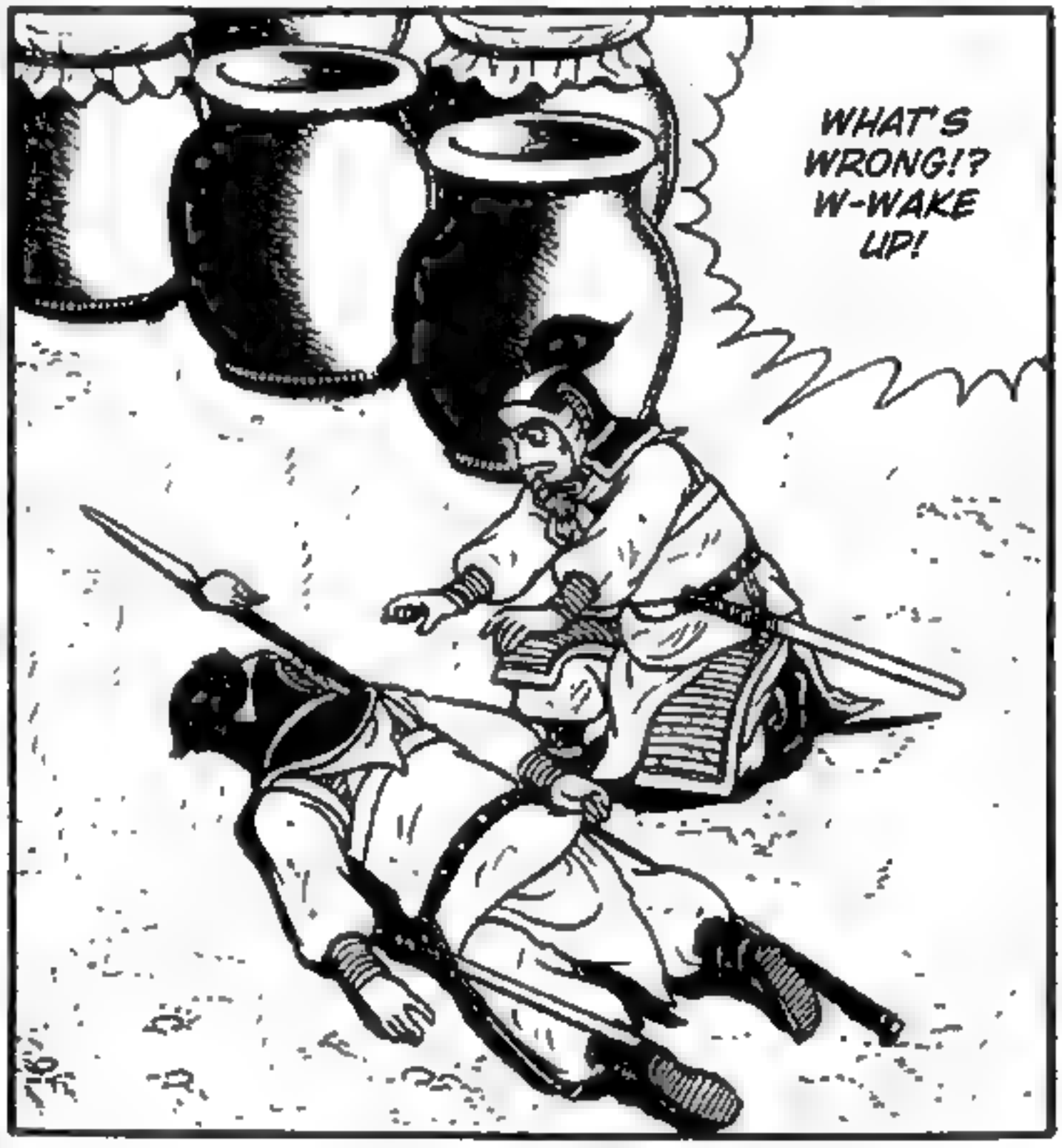


HERE.



WHA?

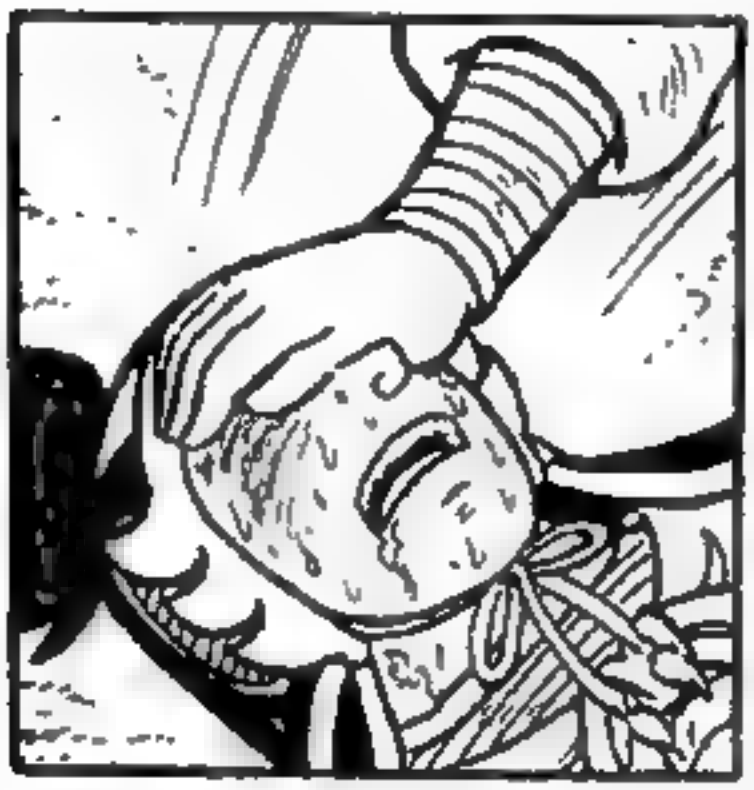
AH!


WHAT'S WRONG!? W-WAKE UP!

HANG IN THERE! I'LL BRING A DOCTOR RIGHT AWAY!

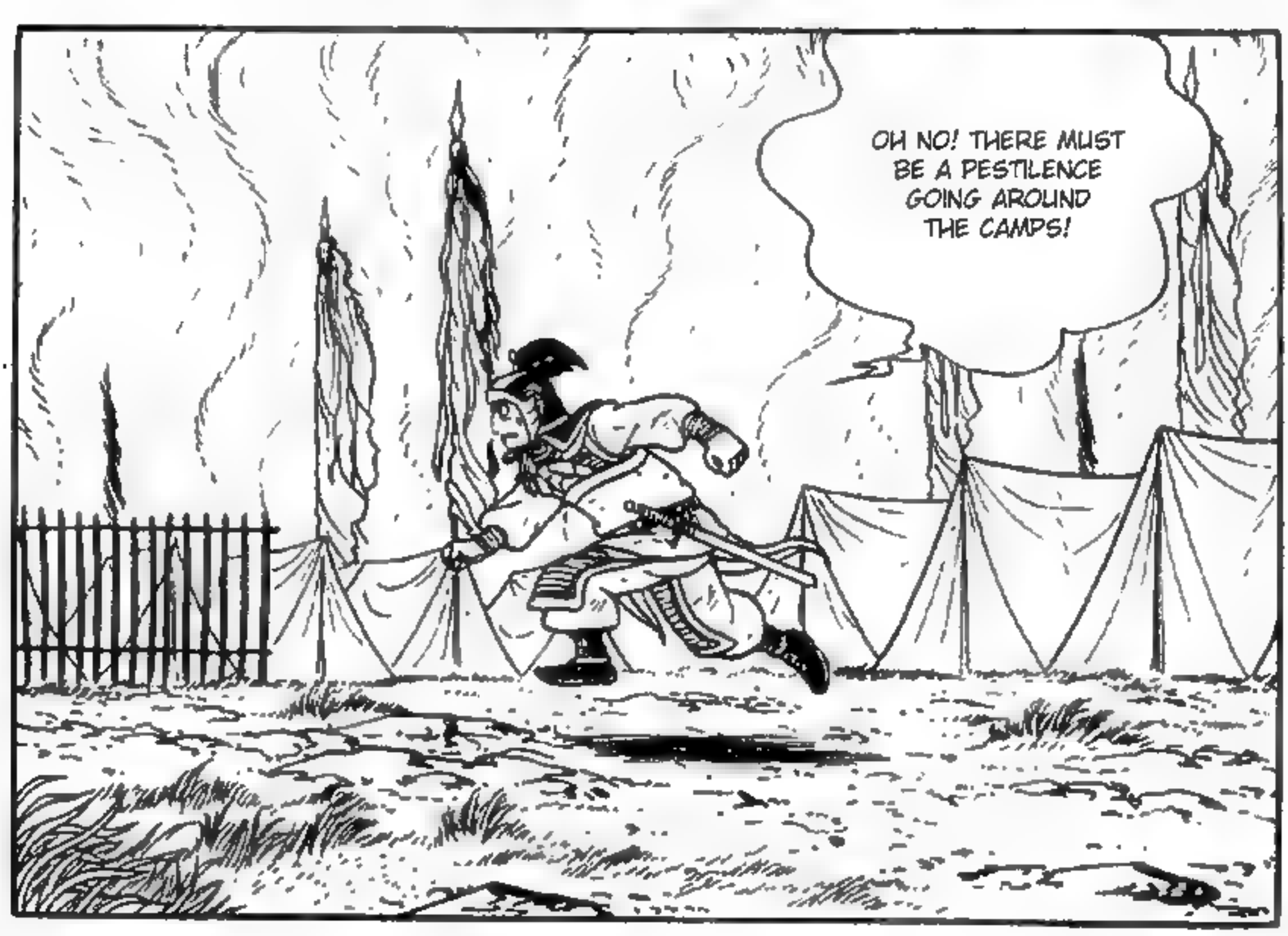
A TERRIBLE FEVER!?

HM?



W-WHAT'S WRONG WITH EVERYONE!?

THEY ALL HAVE HIGH FEVERS!

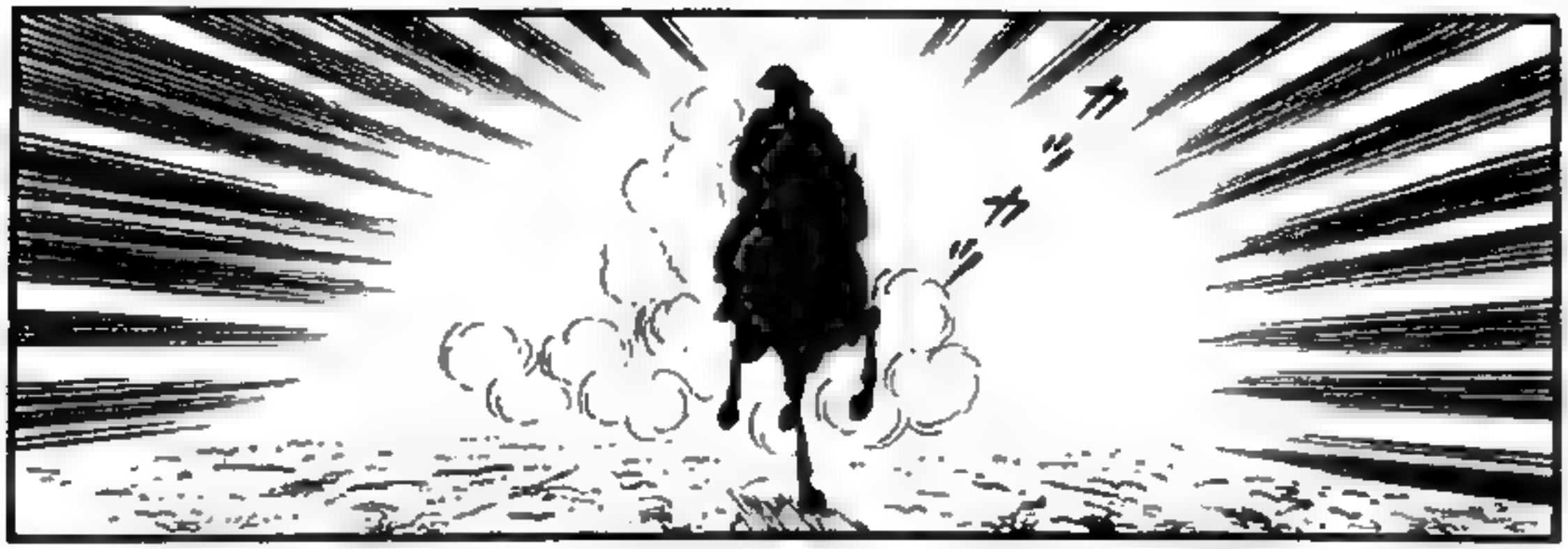

OH NO! THERE MUST BE A PESTILENCE GOING AROUND THE CAMPS!

YES, ACCORDING TO OUR MOST RECENT REPORT, YOUR HIGHNESS.

A PESTI-LENCE!?

YES, SIR.

WE MUST STOP IT FROM SPREADING ANY FURTHER!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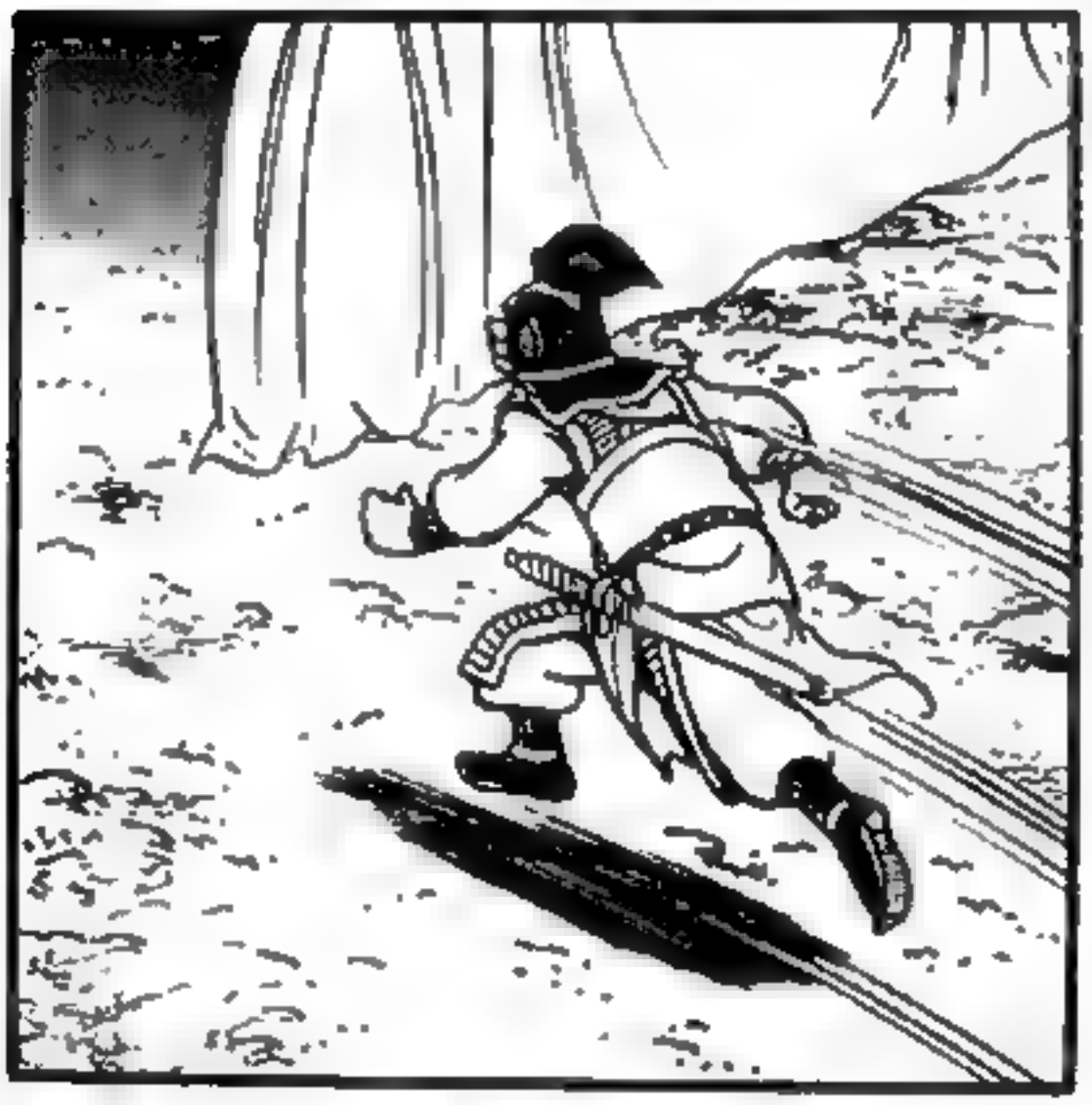
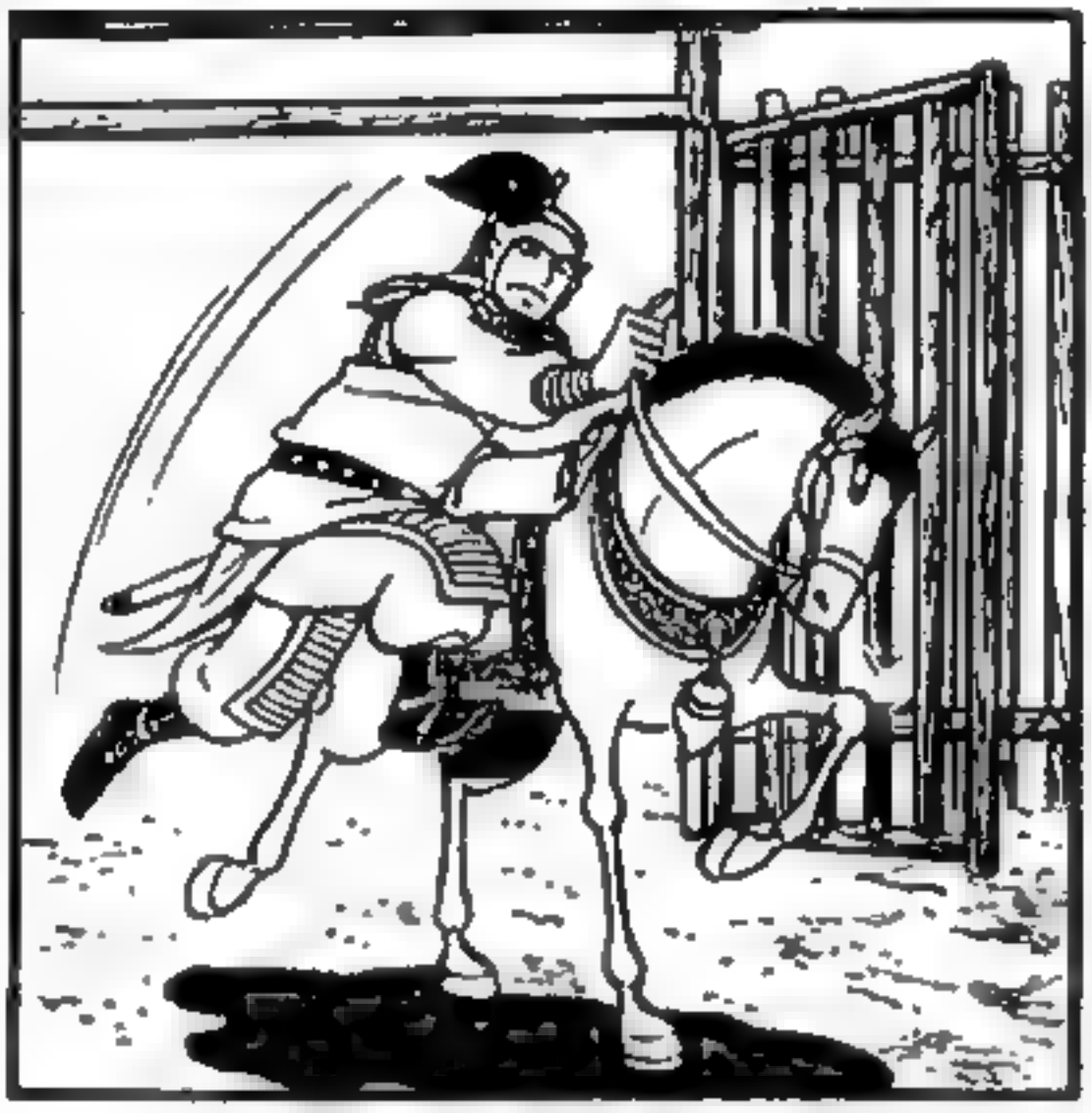
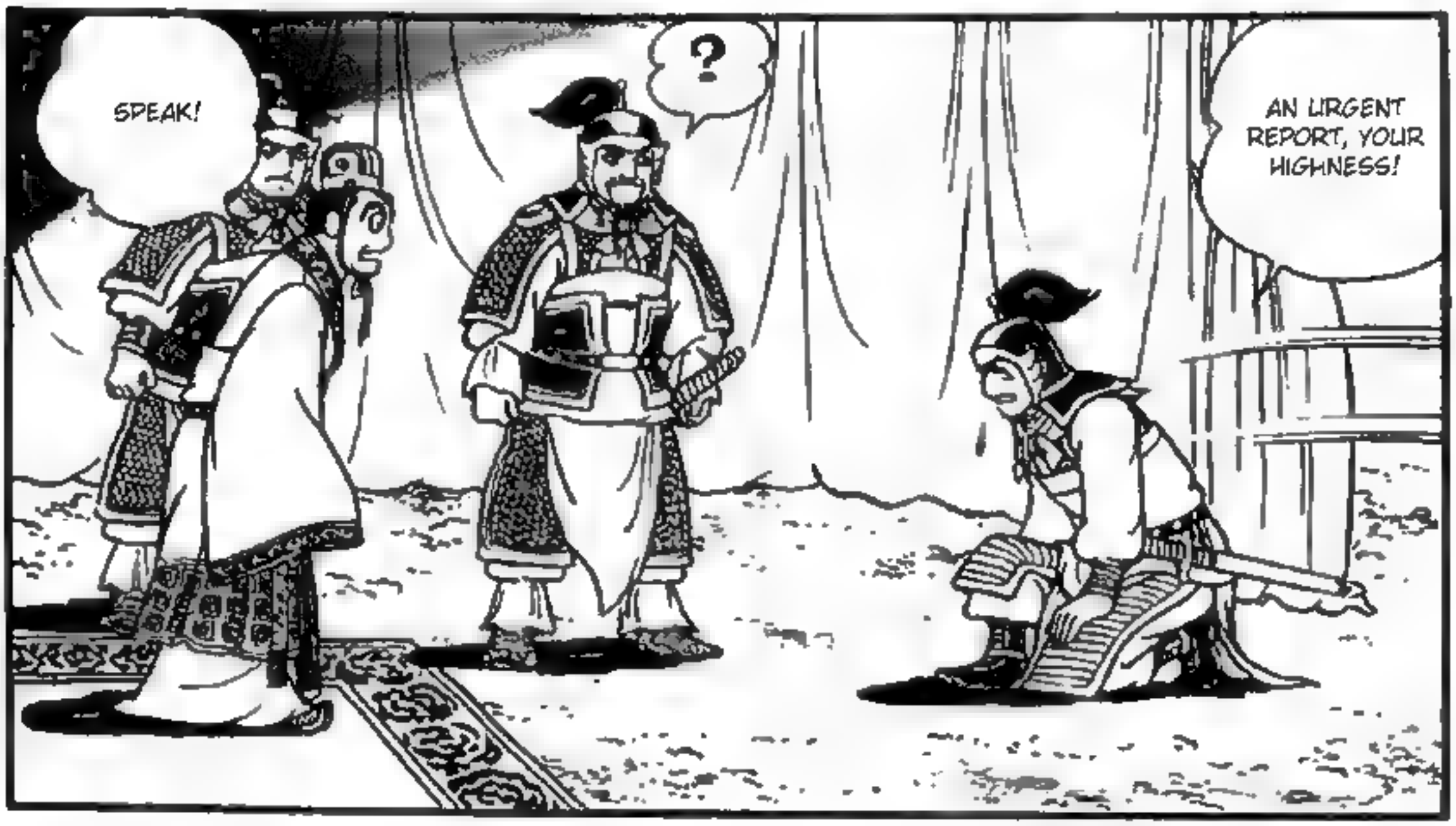





SPEAK!
?
AN URGENT REPORT, YOUR HIGHNESS!

WHAT!?

CAO ZHEN'S SIEGE OF NANJUN CAME TO A DISASTROUS END WHEN A COORDINATED ATTACK FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE CITY LED BY LU XUN AND ZHUGE JIN SURROUNDED OUR TROOPS!

CAO ZHEN AND XIAHOU SHANG ARE CURRENTLY ON THE RETREAT.

WHAT'S HIS CURRENT STATUS!?

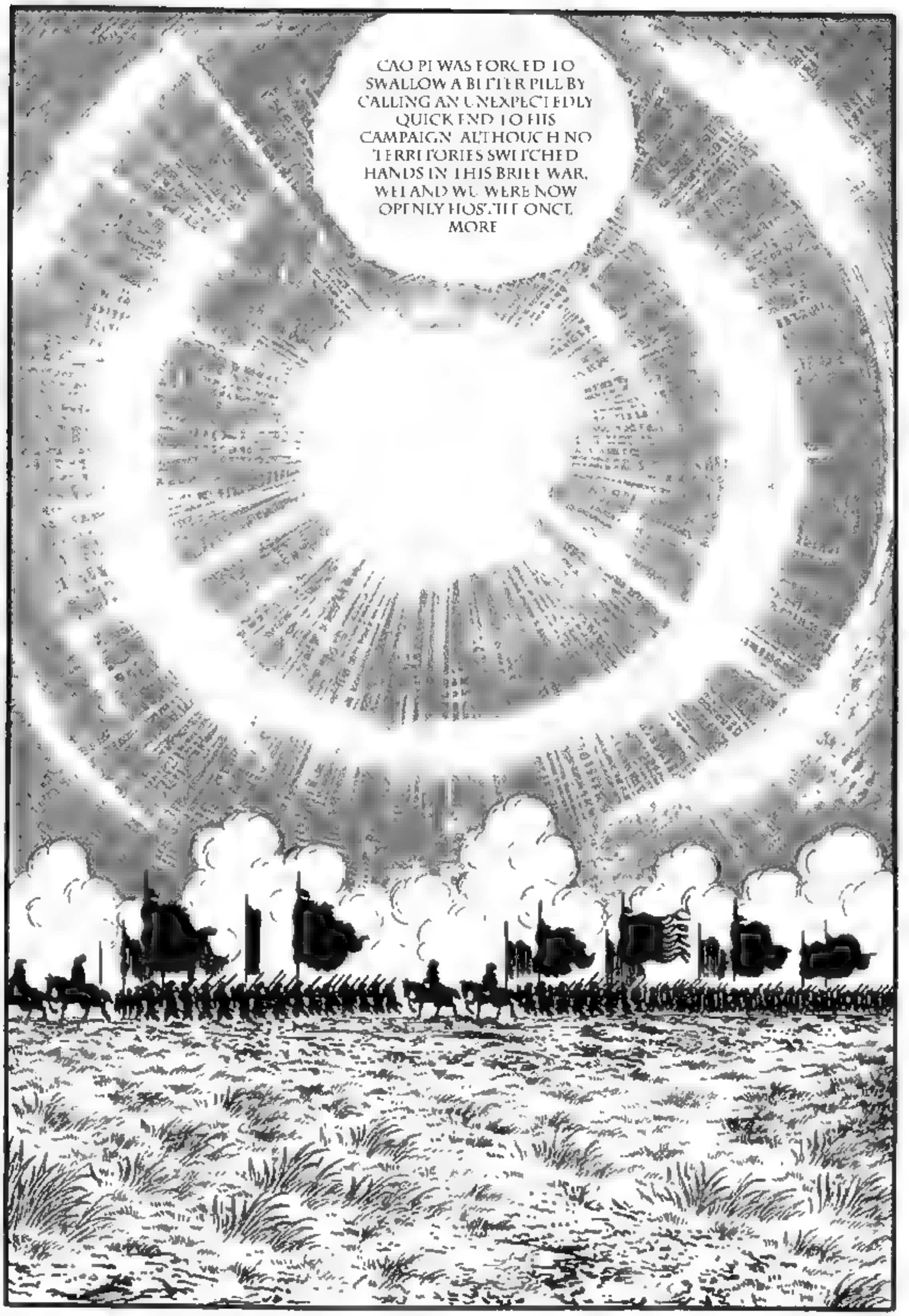
THIS IS TERRIBLE. FIRST, THE NEWS OF CAO REN'S DEFEAT AND NOW CAO ZHEN'S?

YOUR HIGHNESS! CAO XIU'S FORCES WERE DECISIVELY ROUTED BY LU FAN AT DONGKOU!

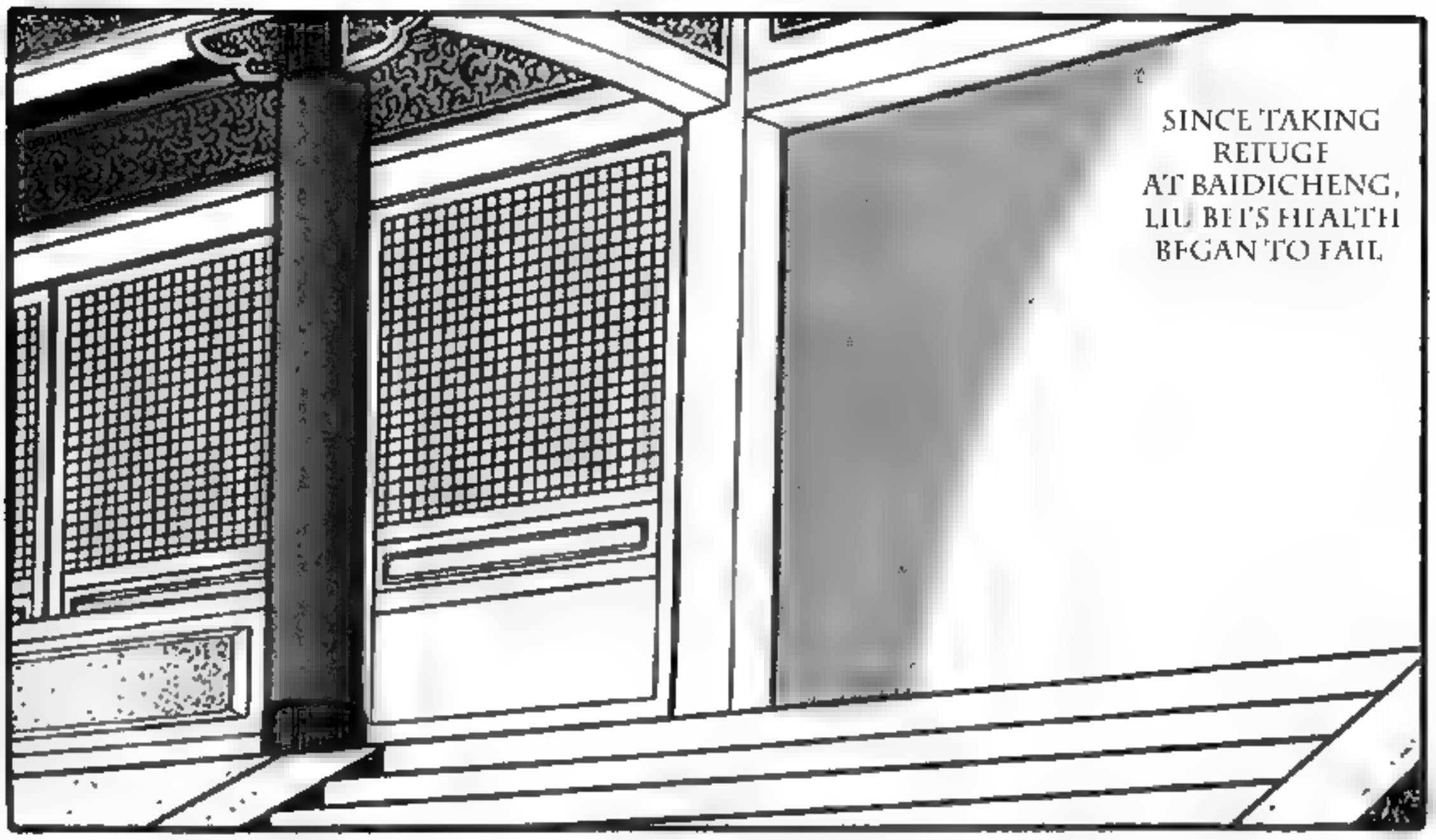
CAO XIU WAS DEFEATED TOO!?

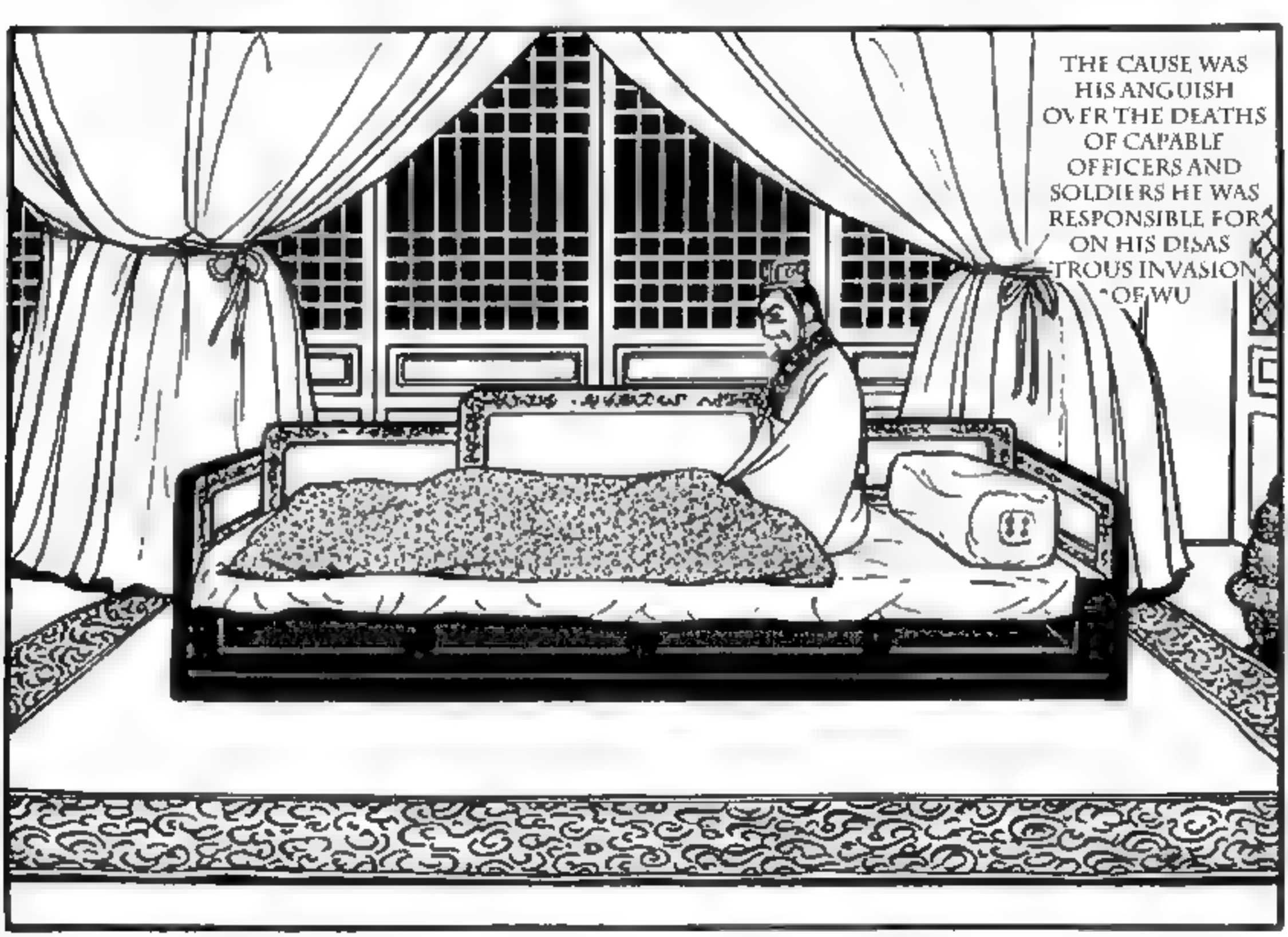
I FEAR OUR RETREAT ROUTES WILL SOON BE ENDANGERED.
THIS IS AN UTTER CATAS-TROPHE, YOUR HIGHNESS.
YOUR HIGHNESS, I SUGGEST WE ABANDON OUR CAMPAIGN EARLY AND WITHDRAW BACK TO THE CAPITA...
DAMN... I THOUGHT WU WOULD BE TOO BATTERED FROM THE SHU INVASION TO PUT UP A PROPER DEFENCE...
YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.
A BITTER BUT WISE CHOICE IN OUR CURRENT CIRCUM-STANCES. SEND OUT THE ORDER TO RETREAT.

CAO PI WAS FORCED TO SWALLOW A BITTER PILL BY CALLING AN UNEXPECTEDLY QUICK END TO HIS CAMPAIGN. ALTHOUGH NO TERRITORIES SWITCHED HANDS IN THIS BRIEF WAR, WEI AND WU WERE NOW OPENLY HOSTILE ONCE MORE

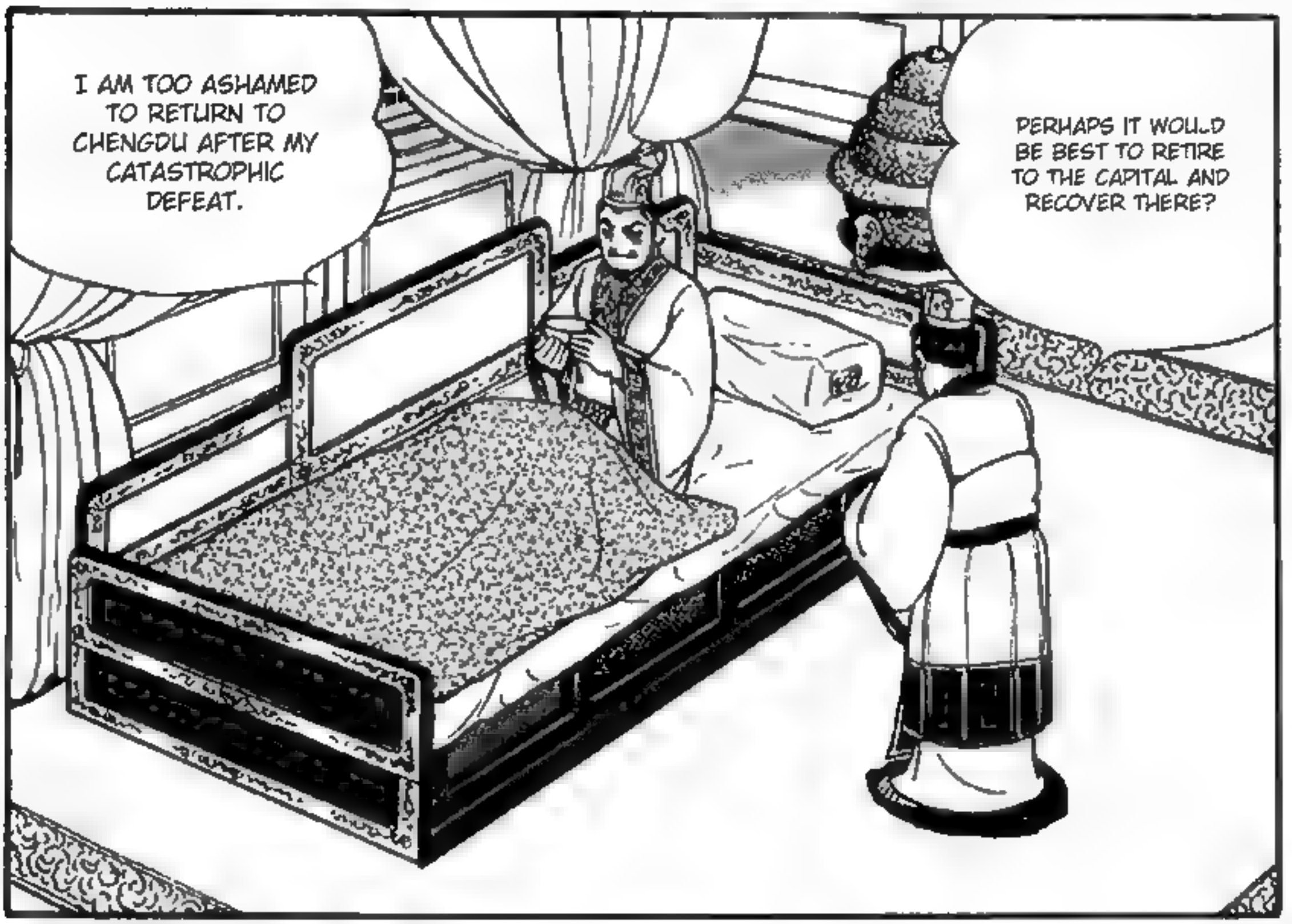


LIU BEI DEPARTS





PLEASE DRINK THIS MEDICINE, YOUR MAJESTY.


I AM TOO ASHAMED TO RETURN TO CHENGDU AFTER MY CATASTROPHIC DEFEAT.
PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BEST TO RETIRE TO THE CAPITAL AND RECOVER THERE?

KONGMING AND OTHER MINISTERS DISAPPROVED OF THE CAMPAIGN FROM THE START. IF I HAD JUST HEEDED THEIR ADVICE, SO MANY LIVES WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN NEEDLESSLY WASTED...

CHENGDU

YES, AND HE CALLS FOR HIS CHANCELLOR'S PRESENCE.

THE EMPEROR IS GRAVELY ILL!?

YES, SIR.

UNDERSTOOD, I SHALL DEPART FOR BAIDICHENG AT ONCE.

LEAVING THE ELDEST SON LIU SHAN IN CHARGE OF THE CAPITAL, KONGMING TOOK THE YOUNGER LIU YUNG AND LIU LI TO SEE THEIR FATHER.

THANK YOU! FOR COMING, KONGMING.

HE MUST HAVE BEEN END-LESSLY AGON-IZING OVER HIS DEFEAT EVEN AS HE WAS SICK...

HE HAS ALREADY WASTED AWAY THIS MUCH...

PLEASE DO NOT SPEAK AS IF YOUR DEATH IS IMMINENT, YOUR MAJESTY.

FOR THE LONGEST TIME, I WAS TOO ASHAMED TO RETURN TO THE CAPITAL AND FACE YOU. BUT NOW THAT MY ILLNESS HAS MADE MY SITUATION DIRE, I HAVE CALLED YOU HERE TO ASK YOU TO LOOK AFTER MY AFFAIRS ONCE I PASS.

KONGMING, IT WAS YOUR GUIDANCE THAT ALLOWED ME TO FOUND A SUCCESSOR-STATE TO HAN AND BECOME EMPEROR. HOWEVER, MY PETTY DESIRE FOR PERSONAL REVENGE HAS LED ME ASTRAY FROM YOUR ADVICE.

MY HEART STILL BURNS WITH THE DESIRE TO VANQUISH THE CAO FAMILY AND RESTORE THE HAN DYNASTY.

YOU STILL MUST COMPLETE THE UNIFICATION OF THE REALM.

YOUR GENEROUS WORDS ARE WASTED ON THIS WORTHLESS SERVANT.

HOWEVER, MY BODY CAN NO LONGER KEEP UP WITH THIS HEART OF MINE. BUT IF YOU CAN LOOK AFTER THE EMPIRE AFTER MY DEATH, I WILL HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

THERE IS STILL ONE OTHER MATTER OF DEEP CONCERN, HOWEVER... MY HEIR LIU SHAN IS STILL YOUNG AND I DO NOT KNOW WHAT KIND OF MAN HE WILL GROW UP INTO.

WHAT IS IT, YOUR MAJESTY?

THUS, I MAKE A SERIOUS REQUEST TO YOU.

I BEG YOUR PARDON!?

IF LIU SHAN GROWS UP WITH THE QUALITIES FIT FOR AN EMPEROR, PLEASE HELP HIM TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITIES. HOWEVER, IF HE IS LACKING AND UNWORTHY OF BEING EMPEROR, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO USURP HIM AND RULE AS EMPEROR.

AS THE OLD PROVERB GOES, "A DYING BIRD SINGS A SORROWFUL TUNE, BUT A DYING HUMAN EXPRESSES UNCLOUDED WISDOM." I HAVE ALREADY PONDERED OVER THIS MATTER AT GREATH LENGTHS. YOU MUST TAKE MY REQUEST SERIOUSLY.

YES, FATHER?

MY SONS.

YES, FATHER.

IF YOU UNDERSTAND, BOW DOWN TO THE CHANCELLOR.

REMEMBER MY WORDS WELL. TREAT CHANCELLOR KONGMING AS YOUR FATHER AND WORK FOR THE GOOD OF THE EMPIRE. THERE IS NOTHING MORE UNFILIAL TO AN EMPEROR THAN A LAZY PRINCE.

GOOD.

YOUR MAJESTY ...

YES, YOUR MAJESTY

AS YOU HAVE ALL HEARD, I LEAVE KONGMING IN CHARGE AS REGENT AFTER MY DEATH. PLEASE OBEY HIS WILL AND WORK HARD TO SERVE HIM.

YES?

ZHAO ZILONG.

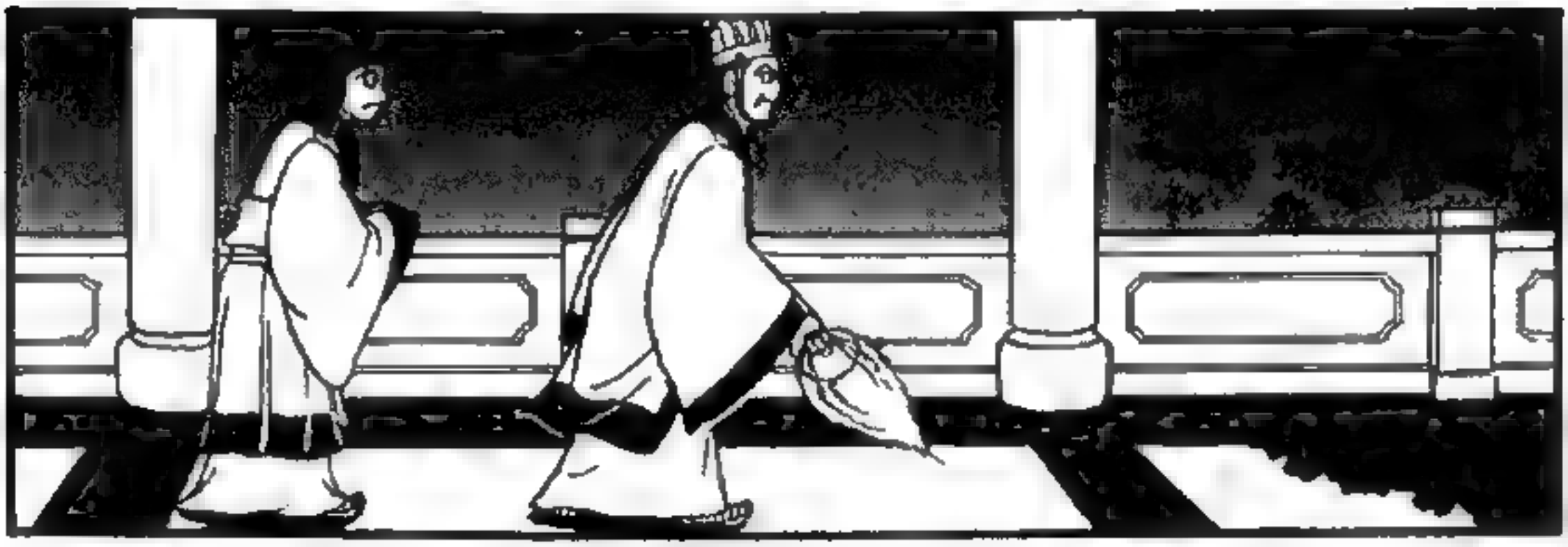
YOUR WORDS BREAK TH S HUMBLE SERVANT'S HEART...

YOU AND I HAVE LIVED SO MANY YEARS TOGETHER BUT I AM AFRAID THIS IS WHERE WE PART. I ASK YOU TO CONTINUE WORKING FOR THE GOOD OF THE EMPIRE AND GUIDE MY SONS.

.....

WITH THAT ALL SAID, YOU MAY ALL STEP OUTSIDE. I WOULD LIKE TO REST IN PEACE.

HIS MAJESTY'S CONDITION HAS WORSENED, SIR!



YOUR MAJESTY!

GUAN YU... ZHANG FEI... YES, I SEE YOU...

YOUR MAJESTY!

I WILL BE GOING WITH MY BROTHERS NOW...

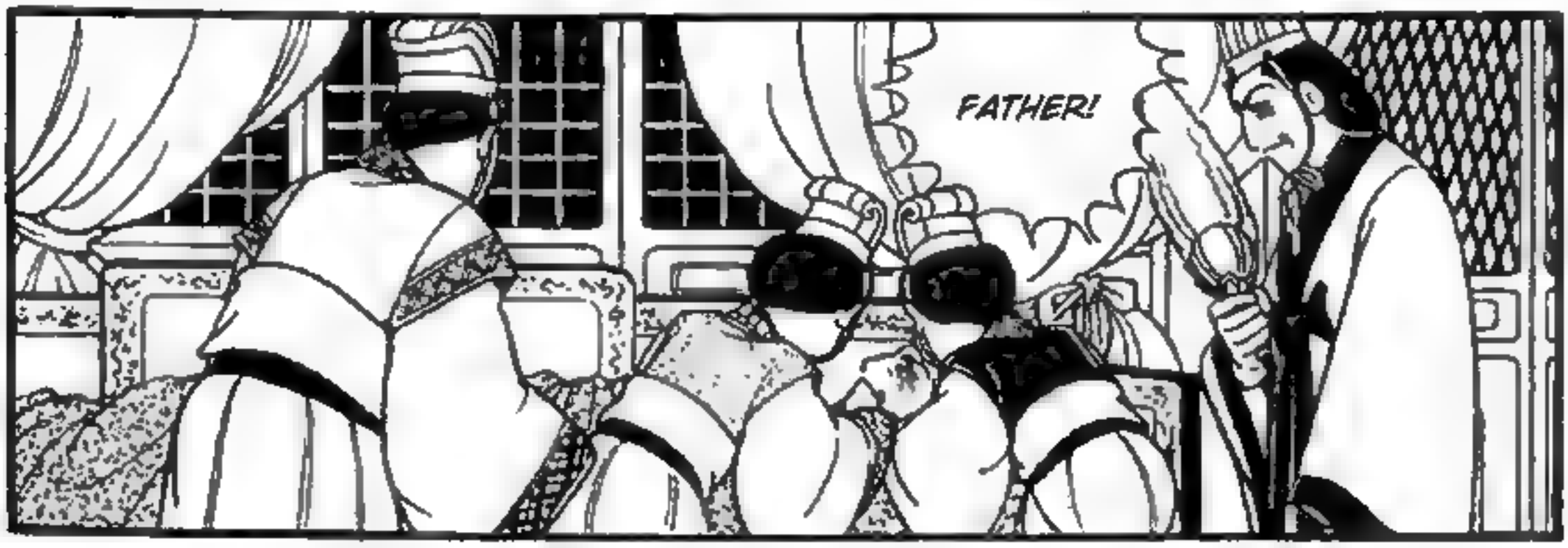
I HEAR MY BROTHERS CALLING...

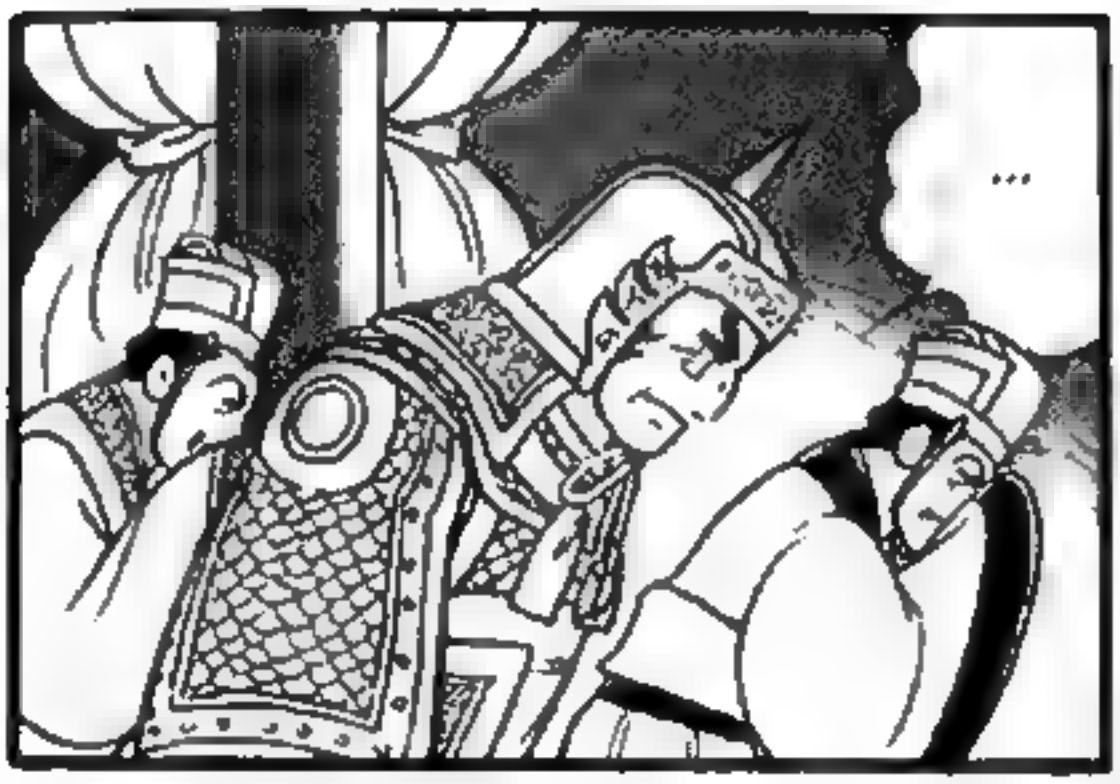
YOUR MAJESTY!

AHH!

FATHER!

YOUR MAJESTY!


FATHER!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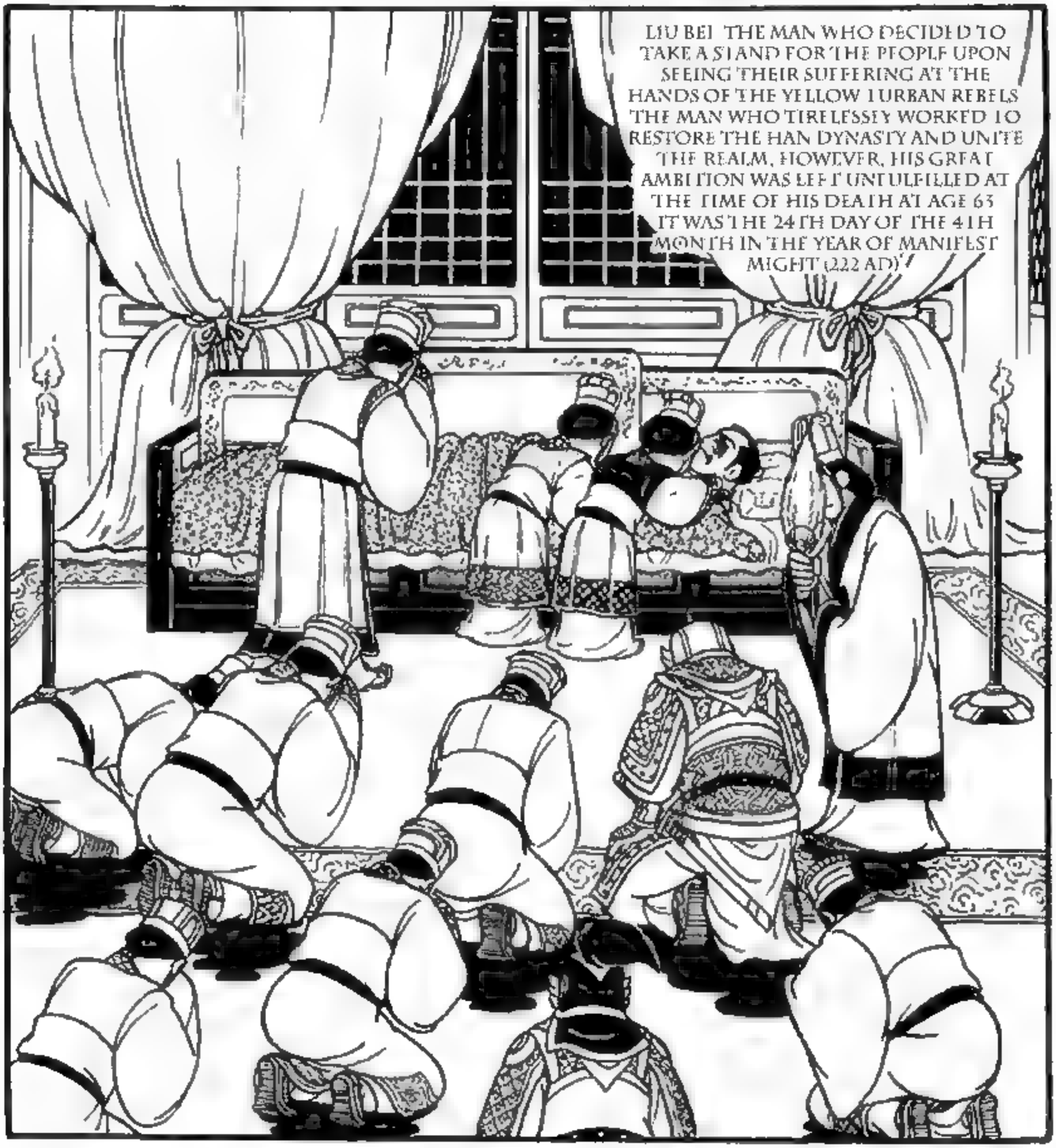
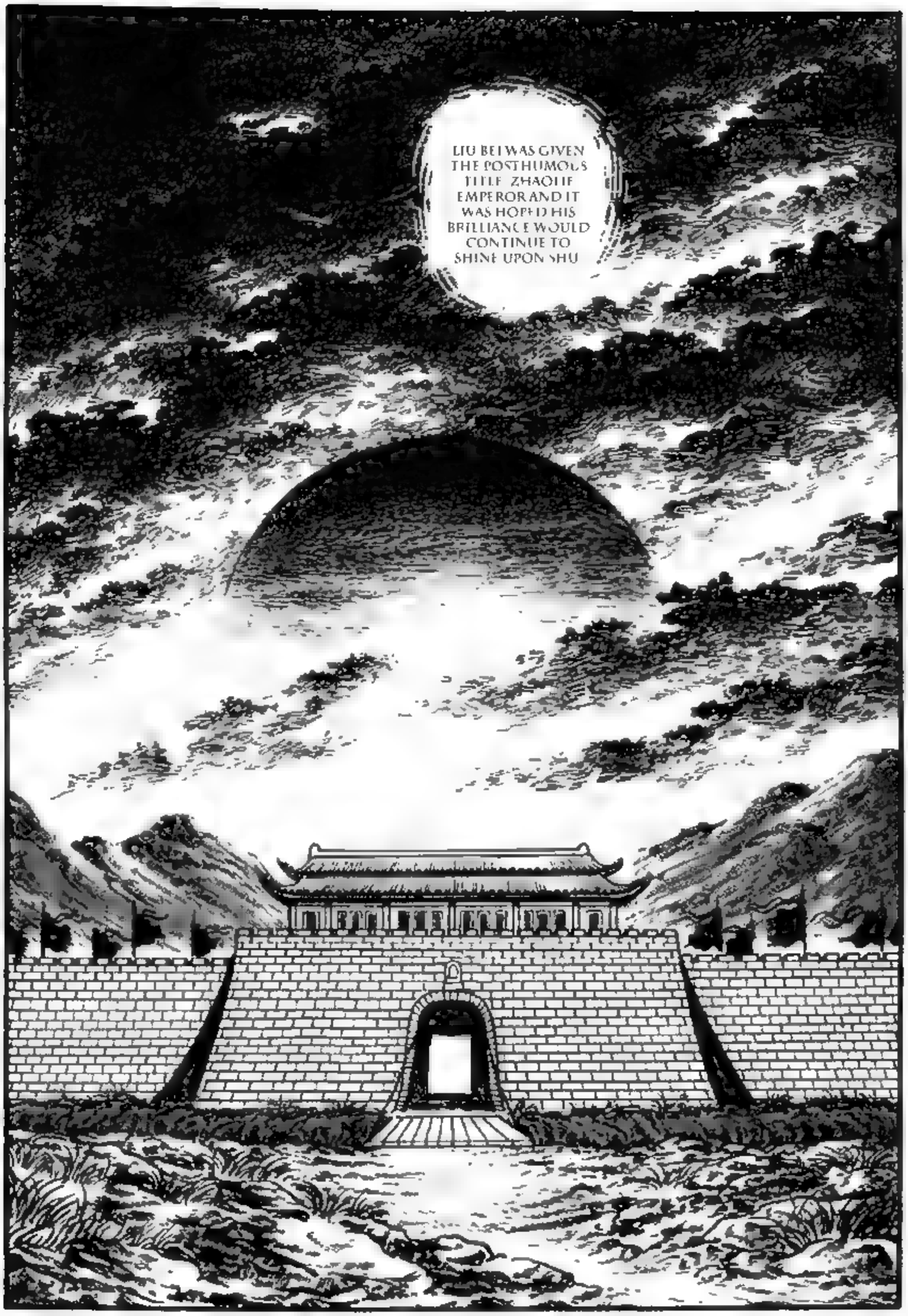

LIU BEI THE MAN WHO DECIDED TO TAKE A STAND FOR THE PEOPLE UPON SEEING THEIR SUFFERING AT THE HANDS OF THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELS THE MAN WHO TIRELESSLY WORKED TO RESTORE THE HAN DYNASTY AND UNITE THE REALM, HOWEVER, HIS GREAT AMBITION WAS LEFT UNFULFILLED AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH AT AGE 63 IT WAS THE 24TH DAY OF THE 4TH MONTH IN THE YEAR OF MANIFEST MIGHT (222 AD)

A FUNERAL PROCESSION CARRIED HIS COFFIN TO CHENGDU
THERE, THE FUNERAL RITES WERE CARRIED OUT AND LIU SHAN ASCENDED THE THRONE AS THE SECOND SHU EMPEROR. THE ERA WAS CHANGED FROM "MANIFEST MIGHT" TO "BEGINNING PROSPERITY."



*ZHAOLIE LITERALLY MEANS CLEAR AND UPRIGHT
*CHINESE EMPERORS ARE REFERRED TO BY THEIR POSTHUMOUS NAMES AFTER THEIR DEATHS.
AN EXAMPLE IS "GAOZU" (SUPREME ANCESTOR) FOR LIU BANG BECAUSE HE FOUNDED THE HAN DYNASTY

500,000 BY 5 APPROACHES

LIU BEI IS NOW DEAD AND HIS SONS ARE STILL MERE CHILDREN. I AM CONSIDERING MARCHING MY ARMIES ON CHENGDU TO CONQUER SHU BUT HOW DO YOU MEN FEEL ABOUT THIS IDEA?

YOU DISAPPROVE STRONGLY, JIA XU?

I AM FIRMLY AGAINST IT, YOUR MAJESTY.

LIU BEI WAS KNOWN FOR HIS ABILITY TO EMPLOY MEN OF GREAT TALENT. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE MANY TALENTED SHU OFFICERS AND MINISTERS WILL WORK EVEN HARDER DURING THIS TIME OF TRANSITION SO NO ENEMY CAN EXPLOIT IT. WE MUST NOT THINK OF SHU AS AN EASY MEAL, YOUR MAJESTY.

TRUE, LIU BEI'S SONS ARE STILL CHILDREN, BUT THE GREAT PILLAR KNOWN AS ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING STILL UPHOLDS SHU.

AH, SIMA YI ZHONGDA!

I DISAGREE WITH JIA XU.

IF ONE DOES NOT ATTACK NOW, WHEN, IF EVER, WILL A MORE FAVOURABLE OPPORTUNITY COME?

SO YOU SUPPORT AN INVASION OF SHU?

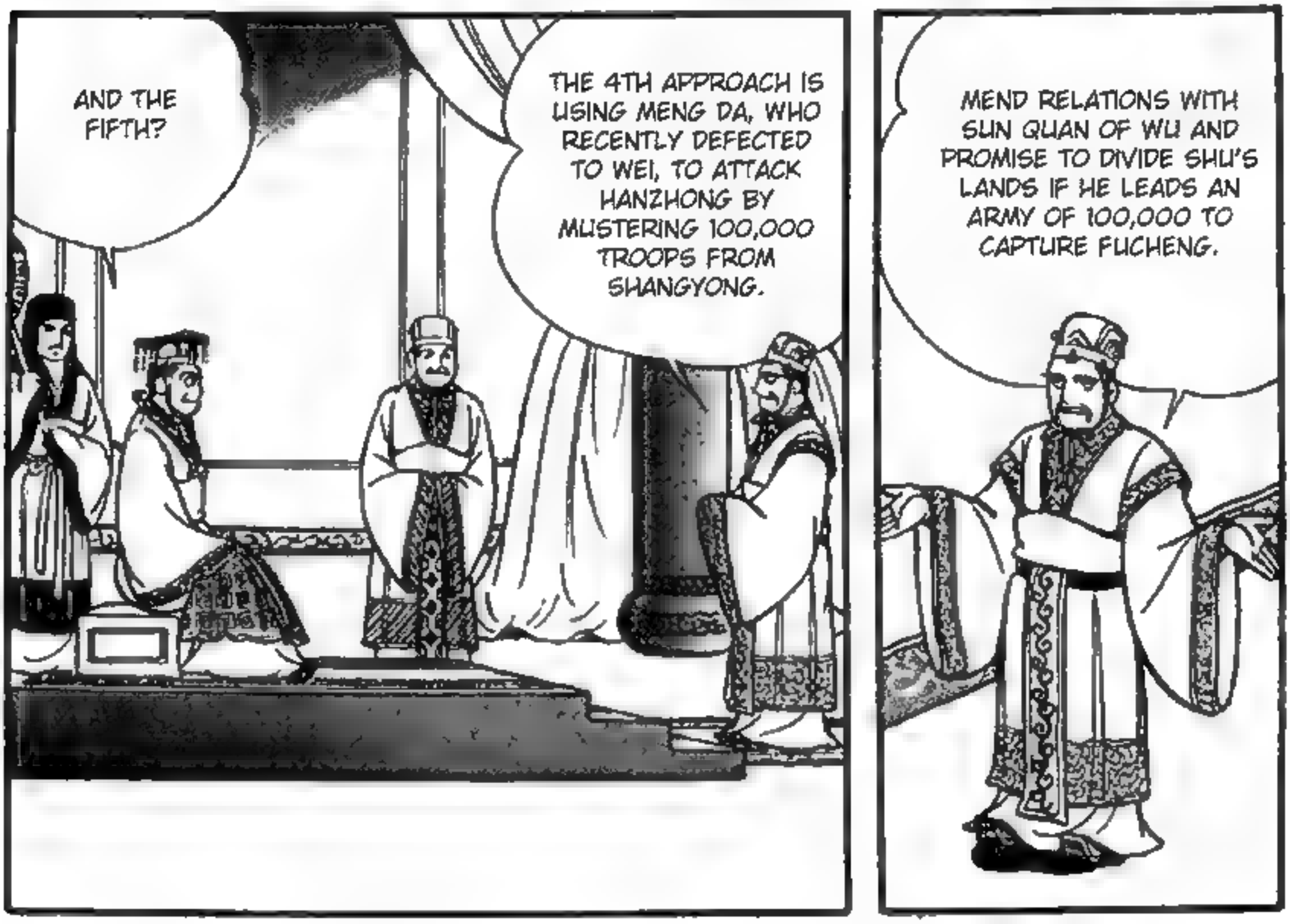
5 APPROACHES?

TRUE, KONGMING WILL BE HARD TO OVERCOME WITH OUR STRENGTHS ALONE, BUT THAT IS WHY WE MUST BRANCH OUT AND HAVE 5 GRAND ARMIES INVADE SHU BY 5 DIFFERENT APPROACHES.

*XIANBEI NOMADIC PEOPLE LIVING MOSTLY IN WHAT IS NOW EASTERN MONGOLIA
NANMAN BROAD NAME FOR NATIVE TRIBAL PEOPLES OF SOUTHWESTERN CHINA

AH, BRIBING THE XIANBEI?
SEND PLENTY OF GOLD AND SILK TO THE XIANBEI KING AT LIAODONG SO THAT HE IS ENTICED TO ATTACK XIPING PASS WITH AN ARMY OF 100,000. THIS IS THE FIRST APPROACH.

AND THE THIRD?
THE SECOND APPROACH IS TO BRIBE MENG HUO, THE KING OF NANMAN TRIBES, SO THAT HE WILL MARCH AN ARMY OF 100,000 ON SHU'S SOUTH SUCH AS YIZHOU OR YONGCHANG.


AND THE FIFTH?
THE 4TH APPROACH IS USING MENG DA, WHO RECENTLY DEFECTED TO WEI, TO ATTACK HANZHONG BY MUSTERING 100,000 TROOPS FROM SHANGYONG.
MEND RELATIONS WITH SUN QUAN OF WU AND PROMISE TO DIVIDE SHU'S LANDS IF HE LEADS AN ARMY OF 100,000 TO CAPTURE FUCHENG.

FOR THE FINAL APPROACH, APPOINT CAO ZHEN AS COMMANDER OF AN ARMY OF 100,000 TO INVADE SHU BY FIRST ATTACKING YANGPING PASS. A GRAND TOTAL OF 500,000 TROOPS, DIVIDED INTO 5 ARMIES AND ATTACKING SHU FROM 5 DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS... SHU'S BOY EMPEROR WILL BE UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THIS INVASION EVEN WITH KONGMING'S HELP.

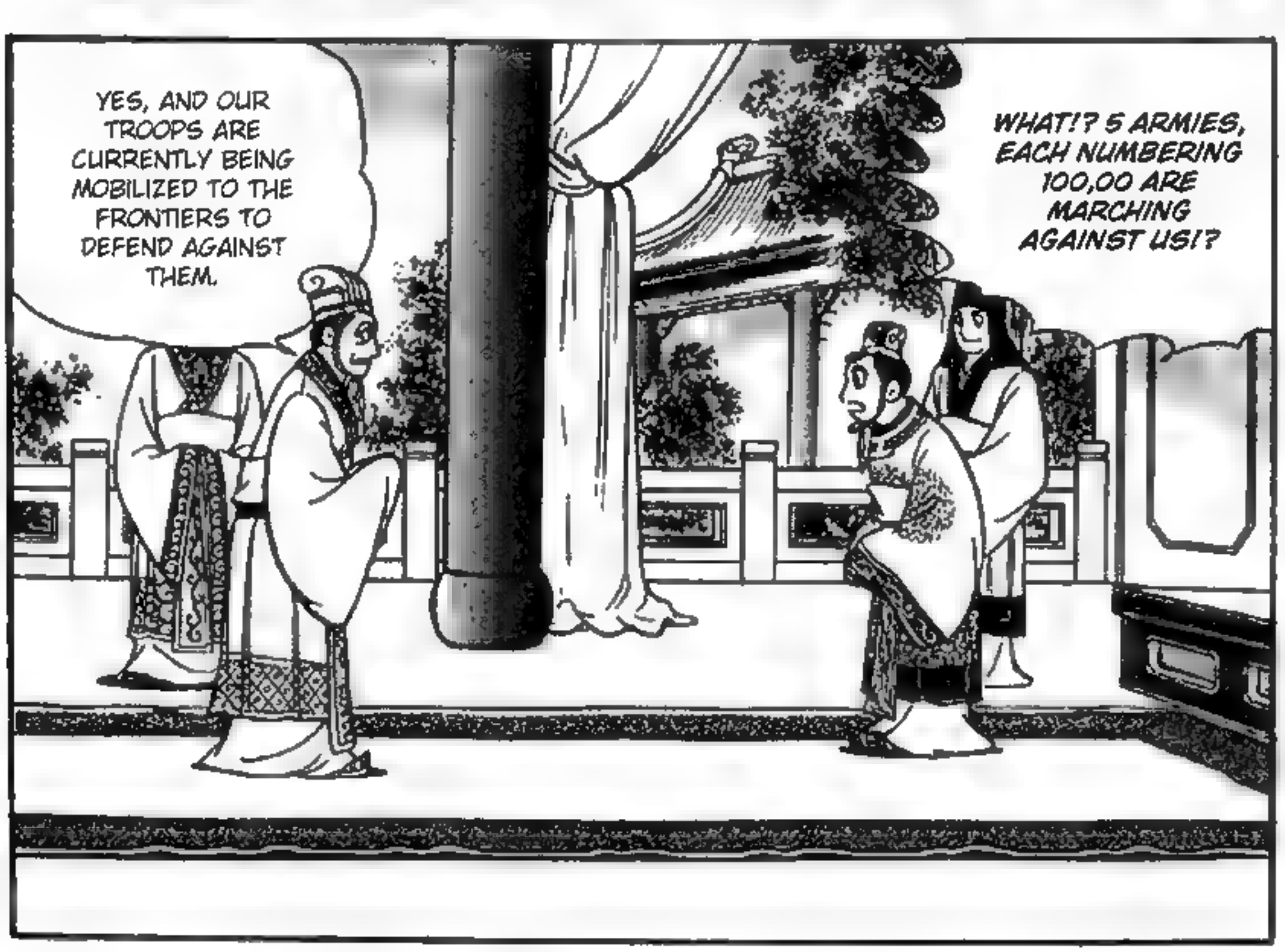
USING XIANBEI, NANMAN, AND WU FORCES TO ATTACK SHU...

HMM...

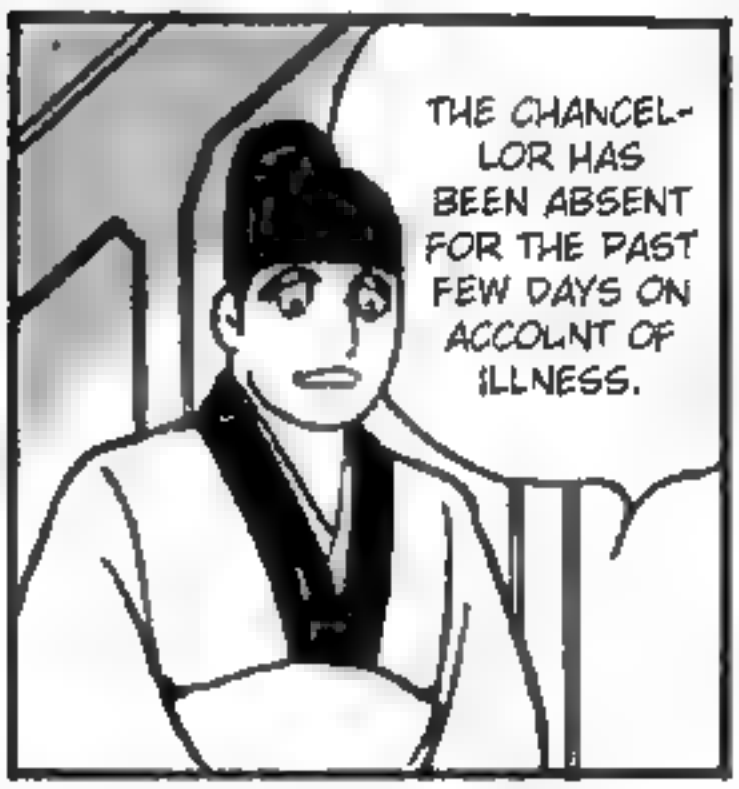
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

EXCELLENT PLAN, SIMA YI! I ASK YOU TO CARRY IT OUT AT ONCE!

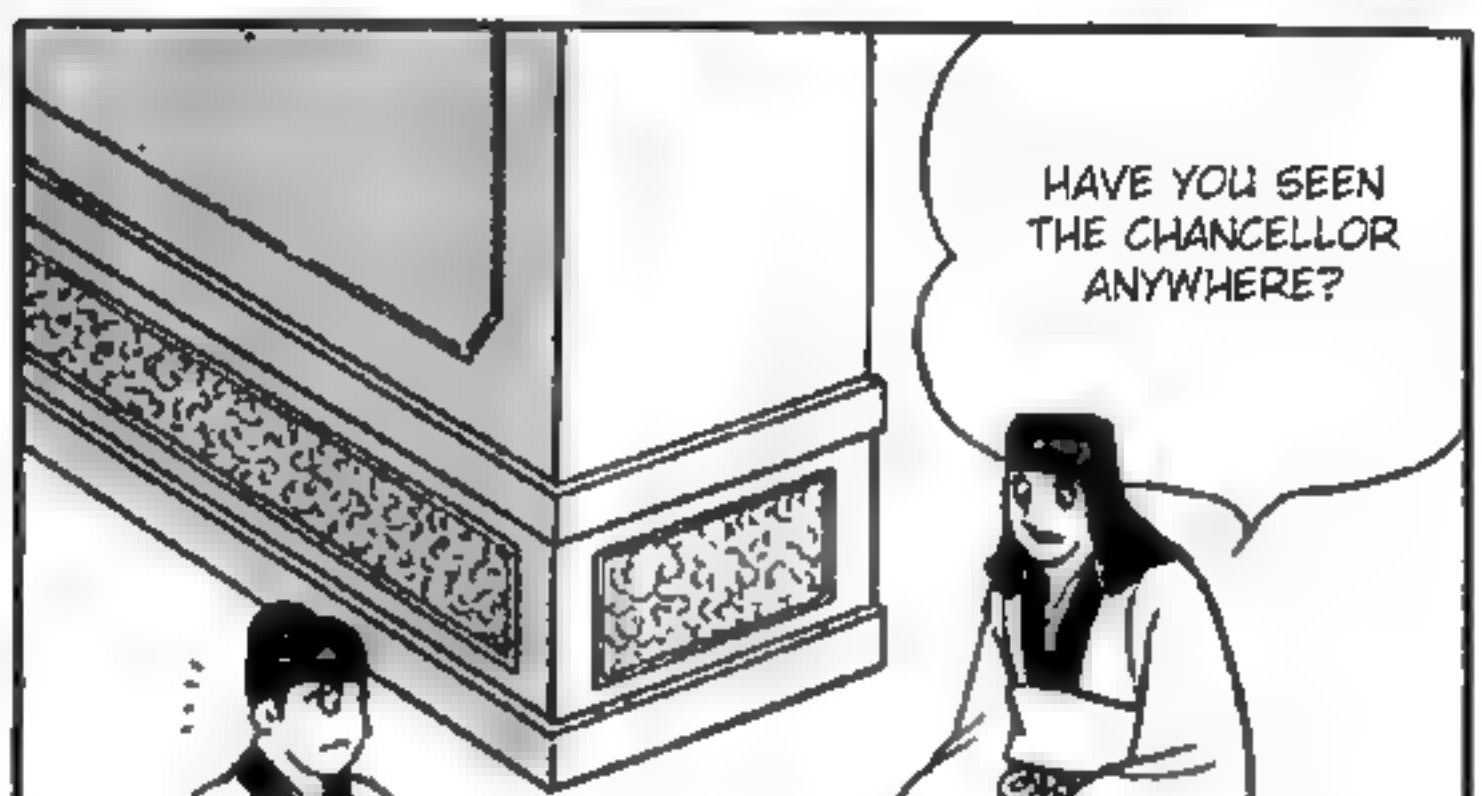
SHU
CAPITAL,
CHENGDU


YES, AND OUR TROOPS ARE CURRENTLY BEING MOBILIZED TO THE FRONTIERS TO DEFEND AGAINST THEM.
WHAT!? 5 ARMIES, EACH NUMBERING 100,00 ARE MARCHING AGAINST US!?

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
THIS IS AN EMERGENCY! CALL KONGMING AT ONCE!


THE CHANCEL-LOR HAS BEEN ABSENT FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS ON ACCOUNT OF ILLNESS.

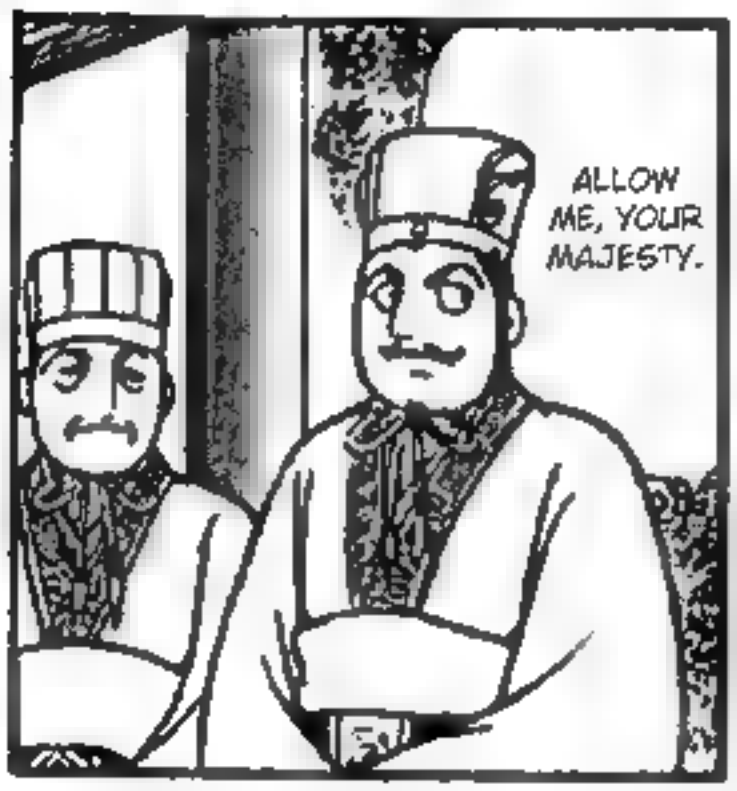
HE'S ILL?

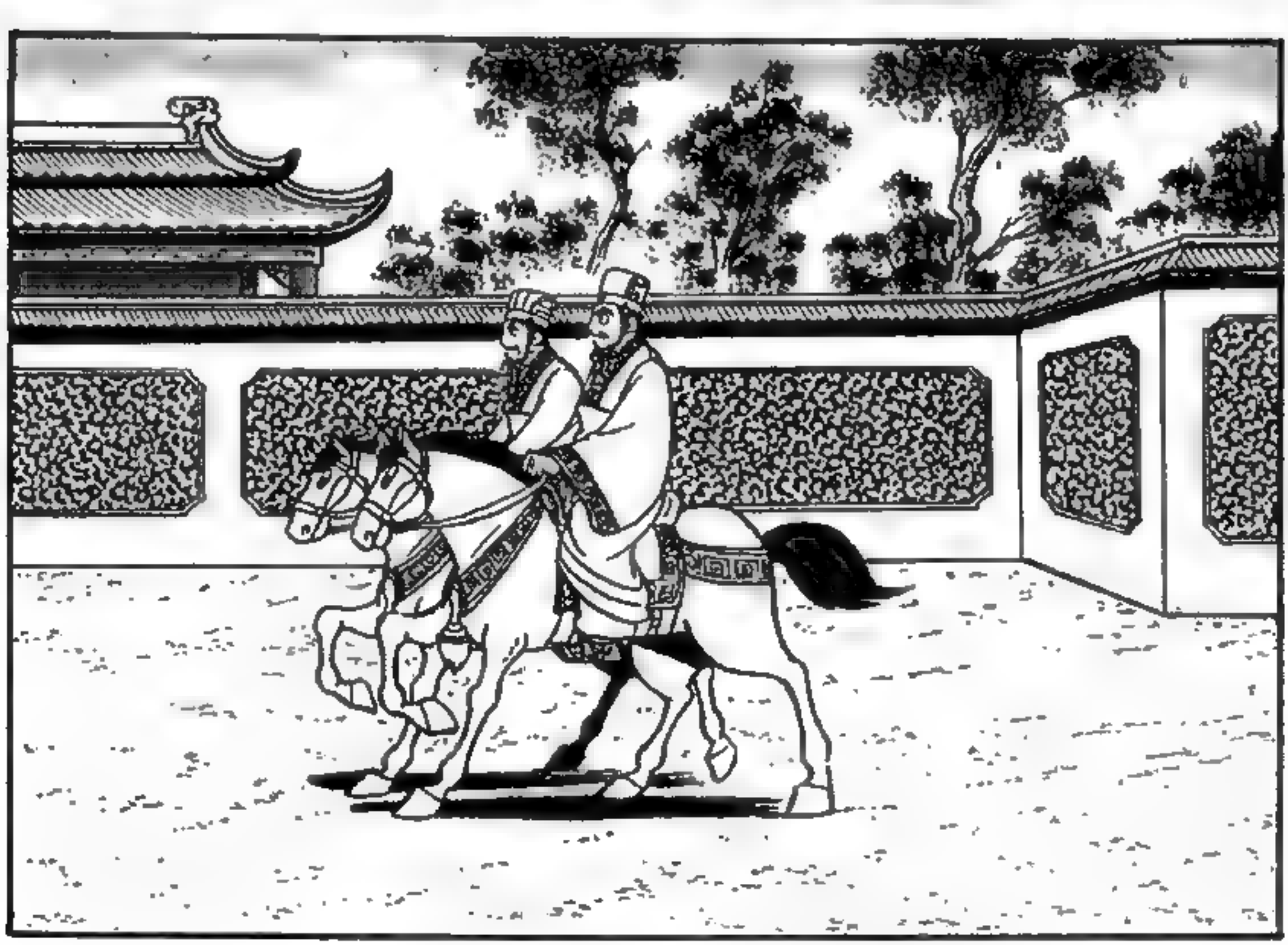

HAVE YOU SEEN THE CHANCELLOR ANYWHERE?

TO BE ILL AT SUCH A TIME...!

SOMEONE GO VISIT HIS HOUSE AND ALERT HIM OF OUR IMMEDIATE CRISIS.

HE'S AT HOME!?
YOUR MAJESTY, THE CHANCELLOR IS CURRENTLY ABSENT ON ACCOUNT OF ILLNESS.


ALLOW ME, YOUR MAJESTY.



NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR FORMALITIES! THIS IS AN EMERGENCY.

I'M AFRAID THE CHANCELLOR IS NOT ACCEPTING ANY VISITORS AT THE MOMENT DUE TO HIS ILLNESS.

HE EXPRESSLY FORBID US SERVANTS FROM LETTING ANYBODY IN.

JUST ALLOW US TO VISIT HIM ON HIS SICKBED MOMENTARILY.

HAVE YOU ALREADY FORGOTTEN YOUR DUTY TO SERVE THE NEW EMPEROR!?

CHANCELLOR! CAN YOU HEAR US!? CAO PI HAS SCHEMED TO MAKE 5 ARMIES TO INVADE SHU FROM 5 DIRECTIONS! HOW CAN YOU LIE ON YOUR SICKBED IN THIS MOMENT!?

NO, SIRS, BUT HE SAYS HE WILL COME TO COURT TOMORROW MORNING SO HE KINDLY ASKS YOU TO RETIRE FOR TODAY.

AH! IS HE ALLOWING US IN NOW?

YES, SIRS.

REALLY?

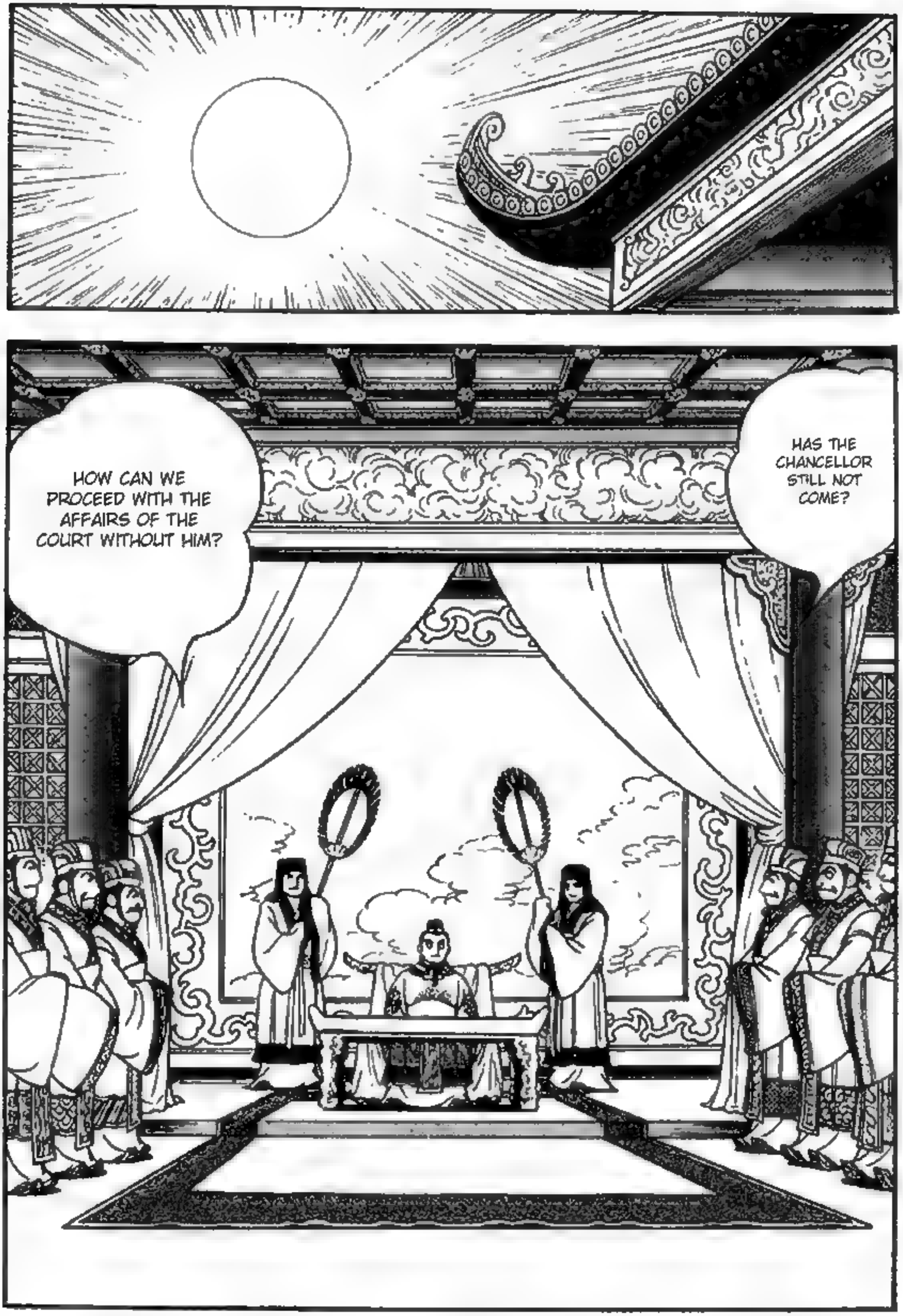
YES.

LET'S GO.

THEN WE SHALL REPORT THIS TO HIS MAJESTY.

YES.

!?


HOW CAN WE PROCEED WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THE COURT WITHOUT HIM?
HAS THE CHANCELLOR STILL NOT COME?

Y-YES...

I'M SURE HE WILL ARRIVE SHORTLY, SO DO NOT GRUMBLE.

HOWEVER, KONGMING DID NOT COME TO COURT THAT DAY EITHER

YOUR MAJESTY, I BELIEVE YOU SHOULD PERSONALLY PAY KONGMING A VISIT ON HIS SICKBED.

WHAT AM I TO DO...?

SAY NO MORE. I WILL VISIT HIM TOMORROW.
STILL, I MUST SAY I AM BAFFLED BY HIS IMPUDENT BEHAVIOUR WHICH SEEMS SO CONTRARY TO THE FORMER EMPEROR'S WISHES.

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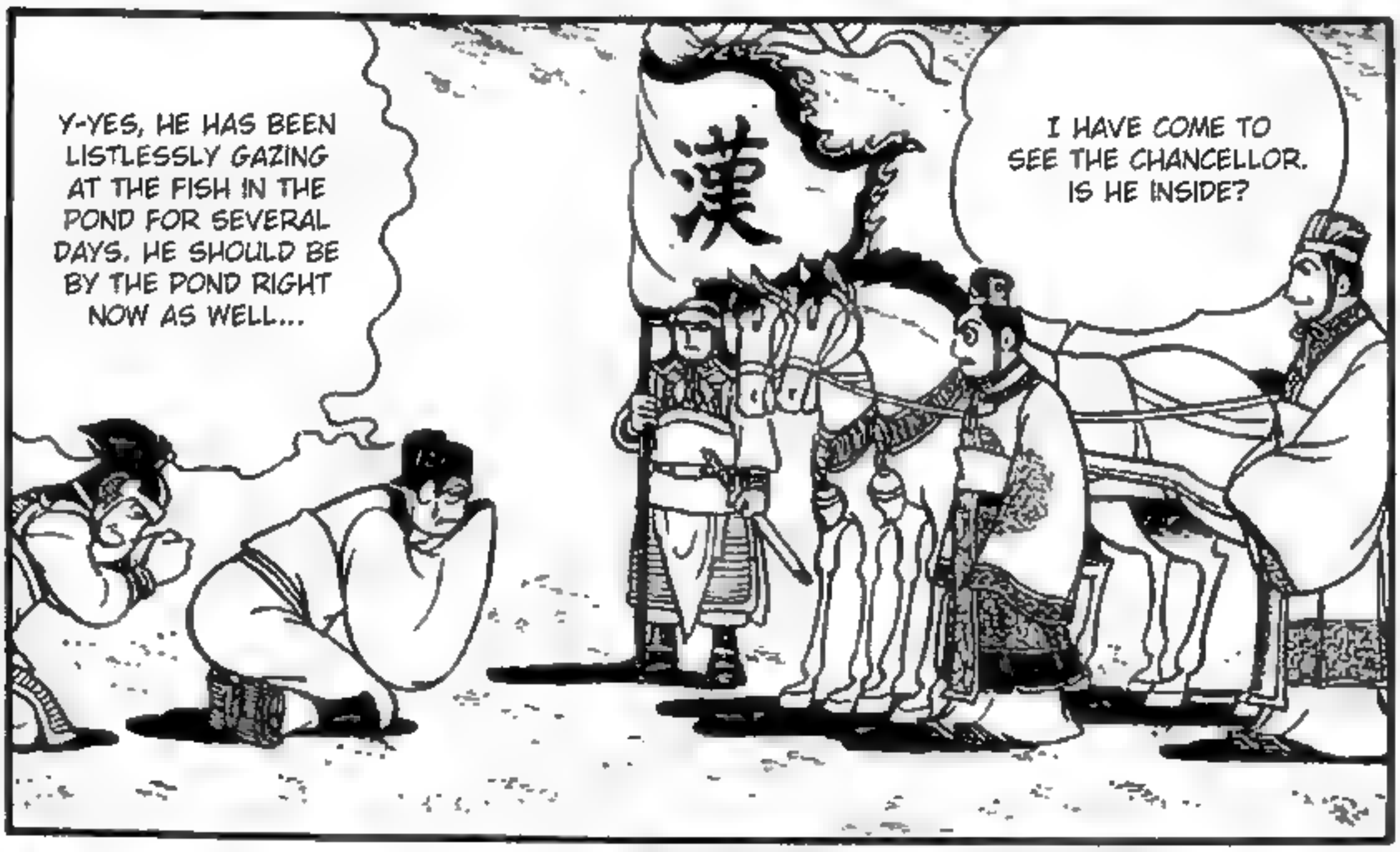
Y-YOUR MAJESTY!

AH!


Y-YES, HE HAS BEEN LISTLESSLY GAZING AT THE FISH IN THE POND FOR SEVERAL DAYS. HE SHOULD BE BY THE POND RIGHT NOW AS WELL...
漢
I HAVE COME TO SEE THE CHANCELLOR. IS HE INSIDE?

OF COURSE, YOUR MAJESTY.
VERY WELL, I WILL GO SEE HIM THEN.

AH!

CHANCELLOR.

PAY NO HEED TO PETTY FORMALITIES, FOR WE HAVE A CRISIS TO WORRY ABOUT. ARE YOU AWARE 500,000 ENEMY TROOPS ARE MARCHING ON SHU AT THIS VERY MOMENT?

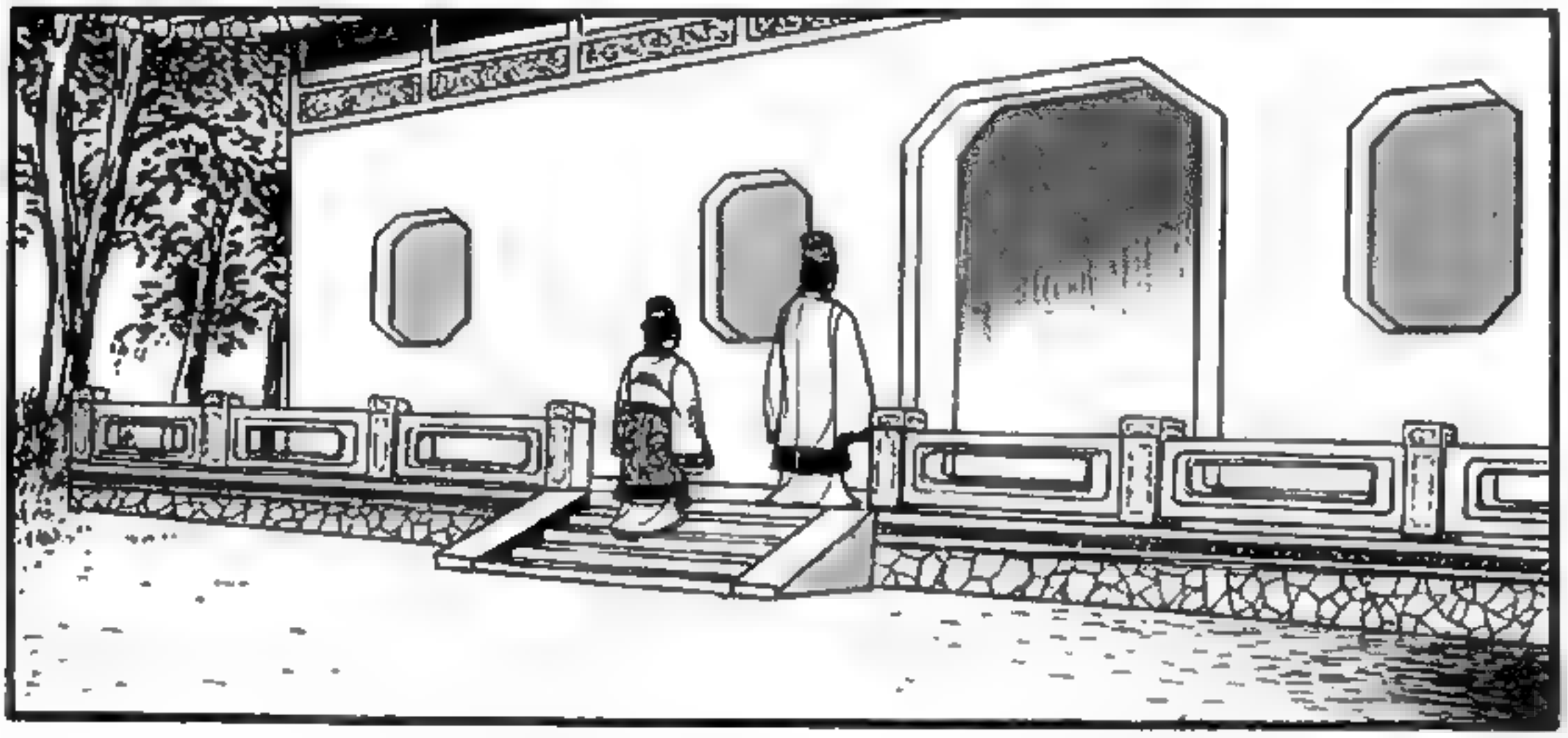
I DID NOT EVEN NOTICE YOUR MAJESTY'S ARRIVAL... I HAVE COMMITTED A GREAT SIN.

THEN WHY HAVE YOU NOT SHOWN UP TO COURT FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS?

OF COURSE HIS LATE MAJESTY HAS ENTRUSTED ME WITH THE DEFENSE OF THE EMPIRE AND I WOULD NEVER LET HIM DOWN.

YOU MAY AWAIT ME HERE OUTSIDE.

UNSAVOURY INDIVIDUALS MAY OVERHEAR US OUT HERE. LET US CONTINUE OUR TALK INSIDE IN PRIVACY.



FORGIVE ME FOR NOT ATTENDING COURT FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS, YOUR MAJESTY.

YOUR THOUGHTS?

I ONLY DID SO BECAUSE I COULD NOT FINISH MY LAST LINE OF THOUGHTS.

YOU'VE ALREADY DEALT WITH THEM!?

YES, I HAVE ALREADY SET PLANS INTO MOTION TO COUNTER 4 OF THE 5 APPROACHING ENEMY ARMIES.

A CHANCELLOR MUST NEVER ENTER PUBLIC DISCUSSION WITHOUT ALREADY HAVING MADE PLANS, LEST HE MAKE THE MINISTERS FEEL UNEASY. I THUS STAYED HERE AT HOME STARING AT THE FISH TO THINK IN SILENCE.

THE NANMAN TRIBESMEN MAY BE BRAVE SOLDIERS BUT ARE PRONE TO DOUBTS AND SUSPICIONS.

AS FOR THE NANMAN ARMY IN THE SOUTH, I HAVE SENT GENERAL WEI YAN TO TAKE CARE OF THEM WITH THE DOUBTING SOLDIERS STRATEGY.

GENERAL MA CHAO IS OF PART QIANG-BLOOD AND IS THUS HELD IN HIGH ESTEEM BY QIANG TRIBESMEN. IN FACT, THEY STILL REFER TO H.M WITH THE TITLE, "GENERAL OF HEAVENLY MIGHT." SINCE THERE ARE MANY QIANG TROOPS IN THE XIANBEI KING'S ARMY, I HAVE ORDERED MA CHAO TO DEFEND XIPING PASS AND PREPARE AMBUSHES SO THAT THEY WILL BE TOO HESITANT TO STRIKE.

MEN PRONE TO SUSPICIONS WILL SOON FEAR THERE ARE ENEMY SOLDIERS HIDING ALL AROUND THEM.

A PLAN WHERE AN ARMY IS CONSTANTLY ON THE MOVE TO HARASS THE ARMIES FROM THE RIGHT, ONLY TO DISAPPEAR AND THEN STRIKE AGAIN FROM THE LEFT.

DOUBTING SOLDIERS STRATEGY?

YES, VERY CLOSE FRIENDS, IN FACT.

BUT ISN'T LI YAN GOOD FRIENDS WITH MENG DA?

AS FOR MENG DA'S ARMY, I HAVE DISPATCHED GENERAL LI YAN.

THUS, I FORGED A FAKE LETTER IN LI YAN'S NAME TO SEND TO MENG DA. ONCE HE READS IT, HE WILL BE TOO CONFLICTED TO MARCH AGAINST HIS OLD FRIEND. HE WILL LIKELY FAKE AN ILLNESS SO AS TO HAVE AN EXCUSE TO RETREAT.

MENG DA IS A FORMER SHU GENERAL WELL-VERSED IN THE CLASSICS AND IS NOT IGNORANT TO VIRTUE AND MORALS. SUCH A MAN CAN EASILY BE SWAYED BY THE GUILT OF CONSCIOUS.

AH, SO YOU HAVE ALREADY INSTRUCTED OUR ARMIES.

AND JUST IN CASE, ZHANG BAO AND GUAN XING EACH WITH 30,000 TROOPS ARE ALSO ON STAND-BY AS RESERVE FORCES TO REINFORCE WHEREVER NEEDED.

AS FOR WEI'S ARMY LED BY THE FORMIDABLE CAO ZHEN HEADING FOR YANGPING PASS, I HAVE SENT ZHAO ZILONG TO DEFEND IT. THE TERRAIN IS QUITE DIFFICULT THERE AND WITH ZHAO ZILONG GUARDING IT, TAKING IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE ENEMIES.

FORGIVE ME FOR WORRYING YOUR MAJESTY.

FORGIVE ME FOR DOUBTING YOU. I THOUGHT I HAD BEEN ABANDONED BY YOU FOR A MOMENT.

IF THE 4 OTHER ARMIES WERE TO YIELD SUCCESS SO THAT SUN QUAN SEES US AN EASY PREY, THEN HE MAY MOBILIZE HIS FORCES TO DELIVER OUR DEATH BLOW.

HOWEVER, THE LAST UNFINISHED THOUGHT OF MINE IS HOW TO PROPERLY DEAL WITH THE 5TH ENEMY ARMY, THAT OF THE WU. CONSIDERING WEI AND WU RECENTLY WAGED WAR AGAINST EACH OTHER, SUN QUAN IS NOT LIKELY TO INVADE SHU FOR WEI'S BENEFIT, BUT....

HOWEVER, I COULD NOT THINK OF ANYONE WITH AN ARTFUL TONGUE QUITE UP TO SUCH A TASK...

THUS, I'VE BEEN WONDERING HOW TO EXACTLY PATCH UP OUR RELATIONS SO THAT WE CAN LET BYGONES BE BYGONES.

AH, HERE THEY COME!

YES, THEY ARE TAKING QUITE LONG...

I WONDER WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE?

AH, HIS MAJESTY IS SMILING!

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING SO LONG OUTSIDE. LET US RETURN TO THE PALACE.

HIS WORRIES MUST HAVE BEEN RELIEVED...

WHAT IS SO AMUSING?

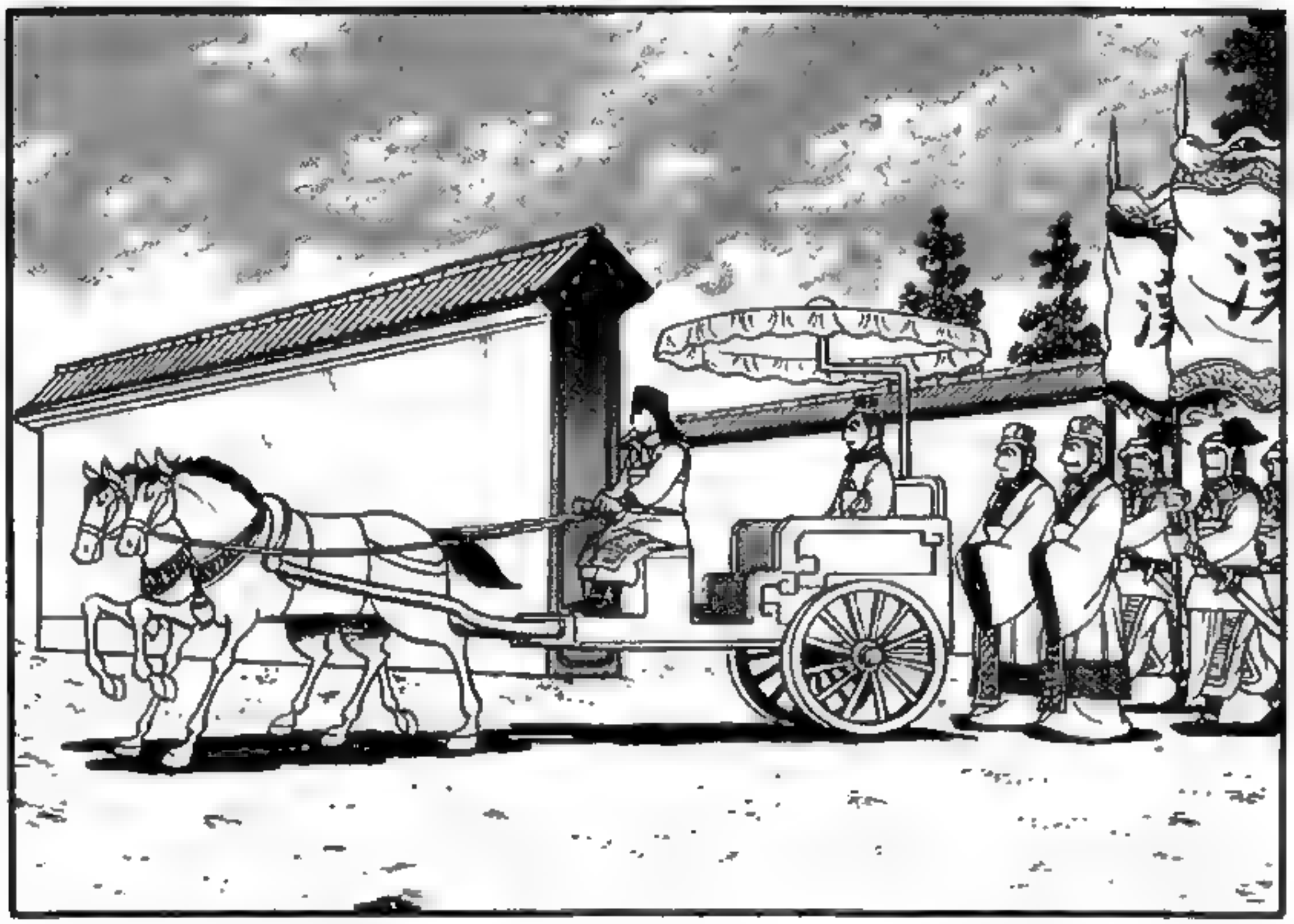
I AM SIMPLY OVERJOYED, SIR.

HAHAHA, THANK THE HEAVENS!

EXCUSE ME THEN, KONGMING. I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE NOW.

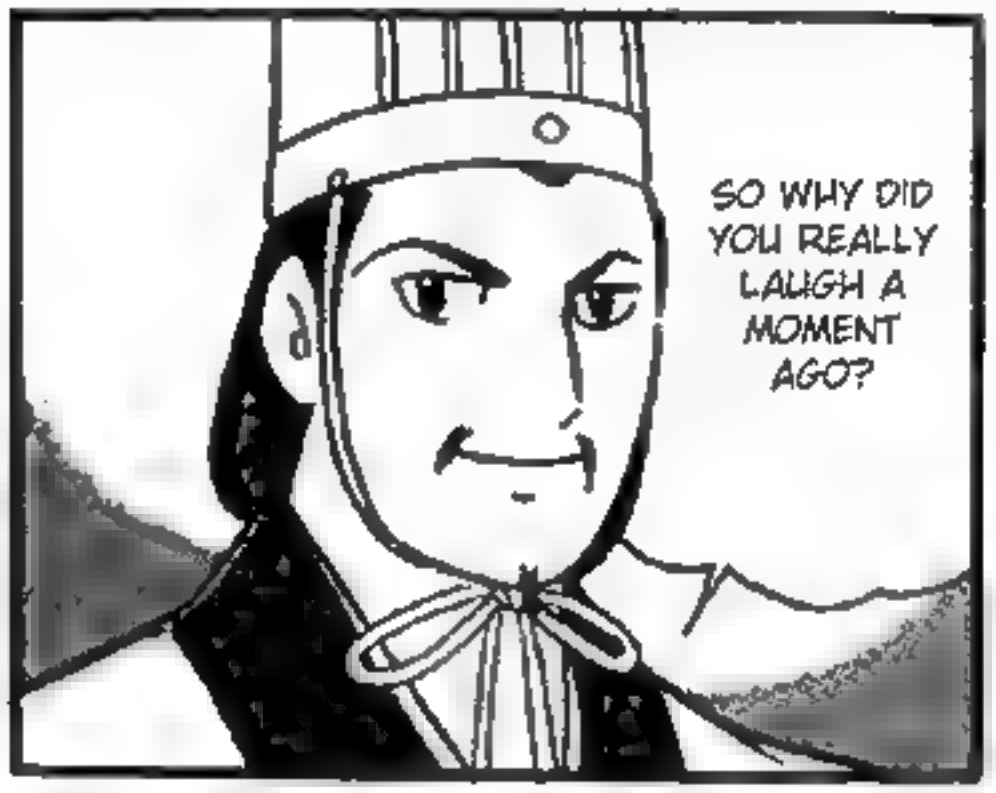
NOT AT ALL.

IS THAT SO? WOULD YOU CARE TO STAY BEHIND AND HAVE A CHAT?



I AM CURRENTLY EMPLOYED AS THE CHAIR OF THE CENSUS BOARD.
YOUR POST?

DENG ZHI, SIR.
MAY I ASK YOU FOR YOUR NAME?


SO WHY DID YOU REALLY LAUGH A MOMENT AGO?

IS THAT SO? CAN'T SAY I'VE EVER THOUGHT OF IT THAT WAY BEFORE.
CENSUS BOARD? OH MY, THAT DOES NOT FIT A MAN OF YOUR SKILLS.

WELL, SEEING HIS MAJESTY SMILE CLEARLY MEANT YOU HAD ALREADY TOLD HIM YOU HAD MADE PLANS TO DEAL WITH THE 5 ENEMY ARMIES. HOW COULD ANY MAN OF SHU NOT SMILE TOO AT SUCH A SIGHT?

FROM WHAT?

AS I SAID BEFORE, BECAUSE I WAS OVERCOME WITH JOY.

IF I MAY CHANGE THE TOPIC, THE REALM IS CURRENTLY DIVIDED AMONG SHU, WEI, AND WU.

SO YOU FELT A SINCERE JOY FROM HIS MAJESTY'S COUNTENANCE...?

AH, YOU ASK THIS PETTY MINISTER SUCH A DIFFICULT QUESTION OF POLITICS.

TO CONQUER THE OTHER TWO AND UNIFY THE REALM IS THE ENTIRE REASON WHY HIS LATE MAJESTY FOUNDED SHU IN THE FIRST PLACE. AND SO I ASK YOU, WHICH DO YOU THINK WOULD BE BETTER TO ATTACK FIRST?

I SEE.

CAO PI MAY HAVE USURPED THE IMPERIAL THRONE BUT WEI IS STILL TOO STRONG AND WE MUST BIDE OUR TIME FOR THE MOMENT.

IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE CHATTING WITH YOU. YOU MAY EXCUSE YOURSELF NOW.

YES, SIR.

HMM...

FURTHERMORE, AS IT HAS NOT BEEN LONG SINCE OUR EMPEROR HAS SUCCEEDED TO THE THRONE, WE SHOULD FOCUS ON STABILITY. THE ONLY WAY TO DO SO IN THE FACE OF A LOOMING WEI IS THROUGH A FRIENDSHIP WITH WU.

HE THINKS EXACTLY AS I DO. HE MAY BE JUST THE DIPLOMAT I WAS LOOKING FOR.

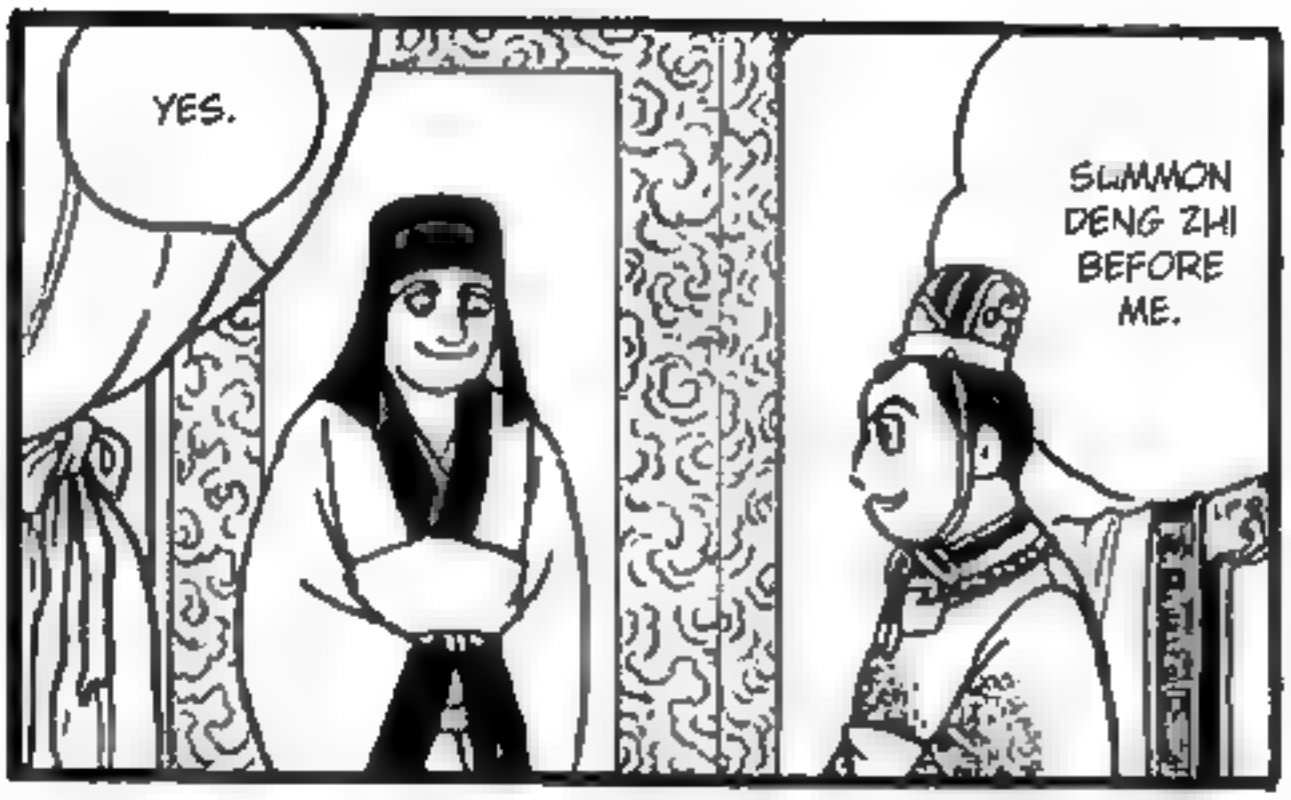
YOU HAVE!?

YOUR MAJESTY, I HAVE FOUND A SUITABLE ENVOY TO SEND TO WU.

YES, HE WILL PROVE QUITE RELIABLE.

DENG ZHI AS AN ENVOY?

THE NAME IS DENG ZHI. HE MAY BE WORKING IN THE CENSUS BUREAU BUT HE IS UP TO THE TASK.


YES.
SUMMON DENG ZHI BEFORE ME.

IF YOU PERSONALLY APPROVE OF HIM, THEN I'M SURE HE IS INDEED RELIABLE.

?
HIS MAJESTY CALLS FOR YOUR PRESENCE.

AH, SO YOU ARE DENG ZHI.

YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT DENG ZHI REPORTING, YOUR MAJESTY.

AN ENVOY!?

YOU ARE TO GO TO WU AS MY ENVOY.

YES, TO FOSTER FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH WU AGAIN. THE CHANCELLOR RECOMMENDED YOU TO ME FOR THIS MISSION.

Y-YES, OF COURSE, YOUR MAJESTY. I WAS MERELY STARTLED THAT A MISSION OF SUCH HIGH IMPORTANCE WOULD BE ASSIGNED TO ME...

YOU ACCEPT, YES?

I WILL SUCCEED IN MY MISSION OR NOT RETURN ALIVE, YOUR MAJESTY.

AND SO DENG ZHI SET OUT FOR WU WITH THE DETERMINATION TO BRAVE DEATH

ENVOY DENG ZHI

AS SHU OFFICERS SCRAMBLED TO THEIR EMPIRE'S DEFENSE, IN WU, ITS MINISTERS DEBATED ON WHETHER TO ACCEPT WEI'S OFFER TO JOIN THE ATTACK

OR PERHAPS THEY THINK WE'VE ALREADY FORGOTTEN HOW ONLY LAST YEAR, THEY SENT 3 ARMIES TO CONQUER OUR LANDS!

THEY DARE ASK US TO BE FRIENDS AGAIN AND JOIN THEIR WAR!? DOES THEIR CAPRICIOUSNESS KNOW NO BOUNDS!?

EXACTLY! PERHAPS WE SHOULD SEIZE THIS CHANCE AND DESTROY AT LEAST ONE ENEMY!

BUT LET US NOT FORGET SHU IS NO FRIEND OF OURS EITHER. THEY ARE JUST AS LIKELY TO ATTACK US AS WEI THE MOMENT WE LET DOWN OUR GUARD.

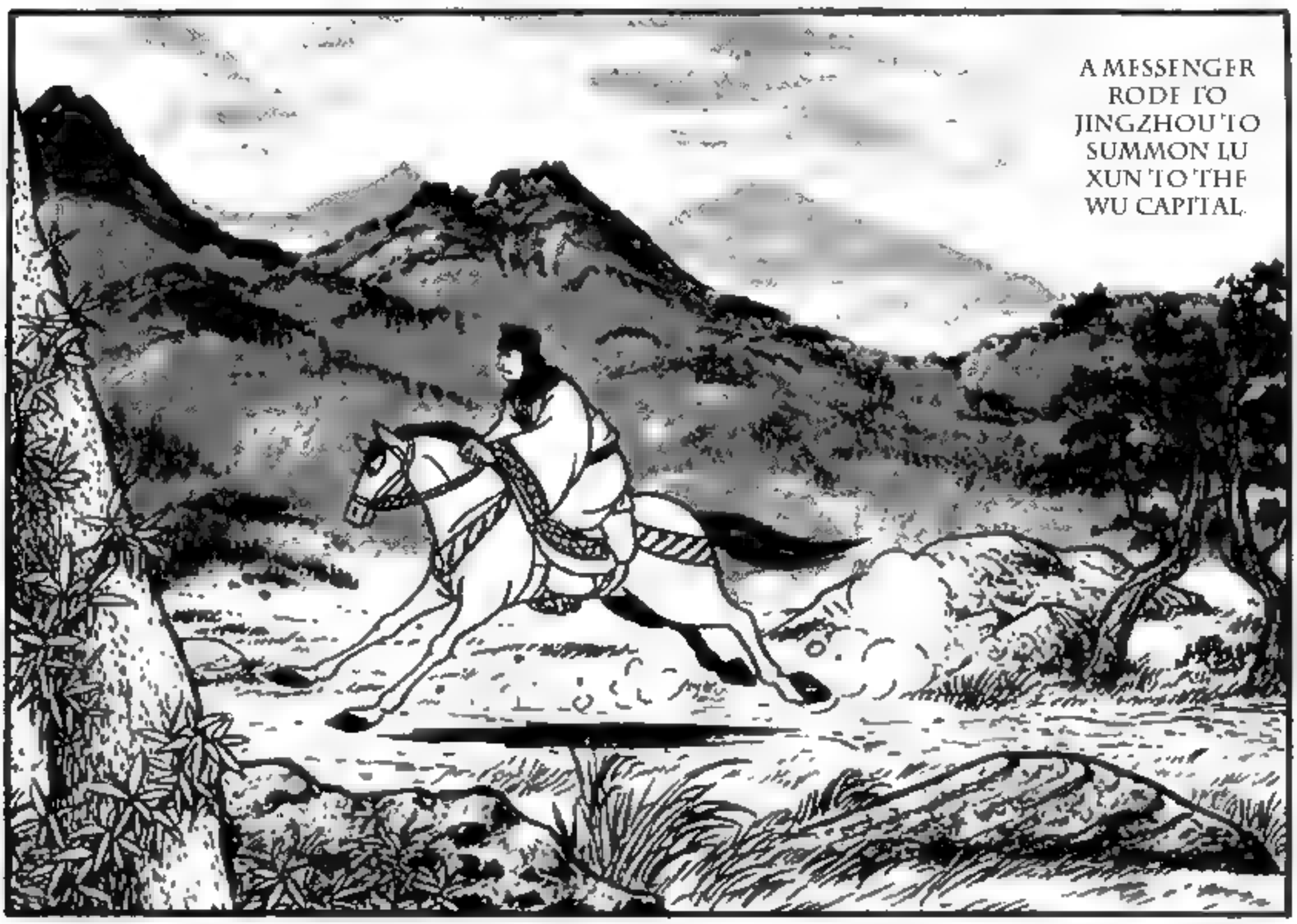
YES, WE SHOULD NEVER FIGHT ON WEI'S SIDE!

I AM FIRMLY AGAINST THIS! WEI CAN NEVER BE TRUSTED!

IF WE CAN ADD EVEN HALF OF SHU TO OUR TERRITORIES, WE WILL BECOME A POWERFUL ENOUGH STATE THAT WEI WILL NOT DARE TO ATTACK.

SUMMON LU XUN. I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR HIS OPINION ON THE MATTER.

ENOUGH, ENOUGH! THIS DEBATE IS GOING IN CIRCLES!


A MESSENGER RODE TO JINGZHOU TO SUMMON LU XUN TO THE WU CAPITAL.

THANK YOU FOR COMING, LU XUN.

IF WE FLATLY REFUSE WEI'S OFFER, CAO PI MAY DECIDE TO PAUSE THE INVASION AND INSTEAD TURN HIS WRATH UPON US ONCE AGAIN.

CAO PI HAS ASKED US TO JOIN IN ON AN INVASION OF SHU ALONG WITH 4 OTHER ARMIES. I HAVE SINCE BEEN DISCUSSING THE MATTER WITH MY MINISTERS AT COURT, BUT THEY ARE DIVIDED EVENLY IN TWO AND WE ARE AT AN IMPASSE. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE MATTER?

THAT WOULD THEN RUN THE RISK OF ANOTHER INVASION FROM WEI, IF THEY DEEM US TO BE SUFFICIENTLY TIRED FROM WAR.

BUT IF WE JOIN THE ATTACK, THAT WOULD MEAN FACING KONGMING. MUCH MANPOWER AND RESOURCES WILL NEED TO BE CONSUMED WHEN FACING A MAN OF HIS TALENT.

AH, SO WE PLAY THE SPECTATOR?

THUS, I SUGGEST WE ACCEPT THE OFFER AND SEND OUR ARMY FORWARD BUT DO NO MORE ELSE. WE WILL SIMPLY OBSERVE HOW THE SITUATION PLAYS OUT.

SPLENDID IDEA.

YES, AND IF THE WEI ARMIES GAIN THE UPPER HAND, THEN WE CAN ORDER OUR ARMY TO MARCH FOR CHENGDU.

CARRY OUT THE PLAN RIGHT AWAY THEN.

WU FORCES SAILED UP THE YANGTZE RIVER BUT DID NOTHING MORE THAN AWAIT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE OTHER FRONTS.

IN THE OTHER 4 FRONTS, THE WAR PLAYED OUT FAVOURABLY INTO SHU HANDS

MA CHAO DEFEATED THE XIANBEI ARMY.

AND THE NANMANS RETREATED IN FEAR FROM WEI YAN'S DOUBTING SOLDIERS STRATEGY

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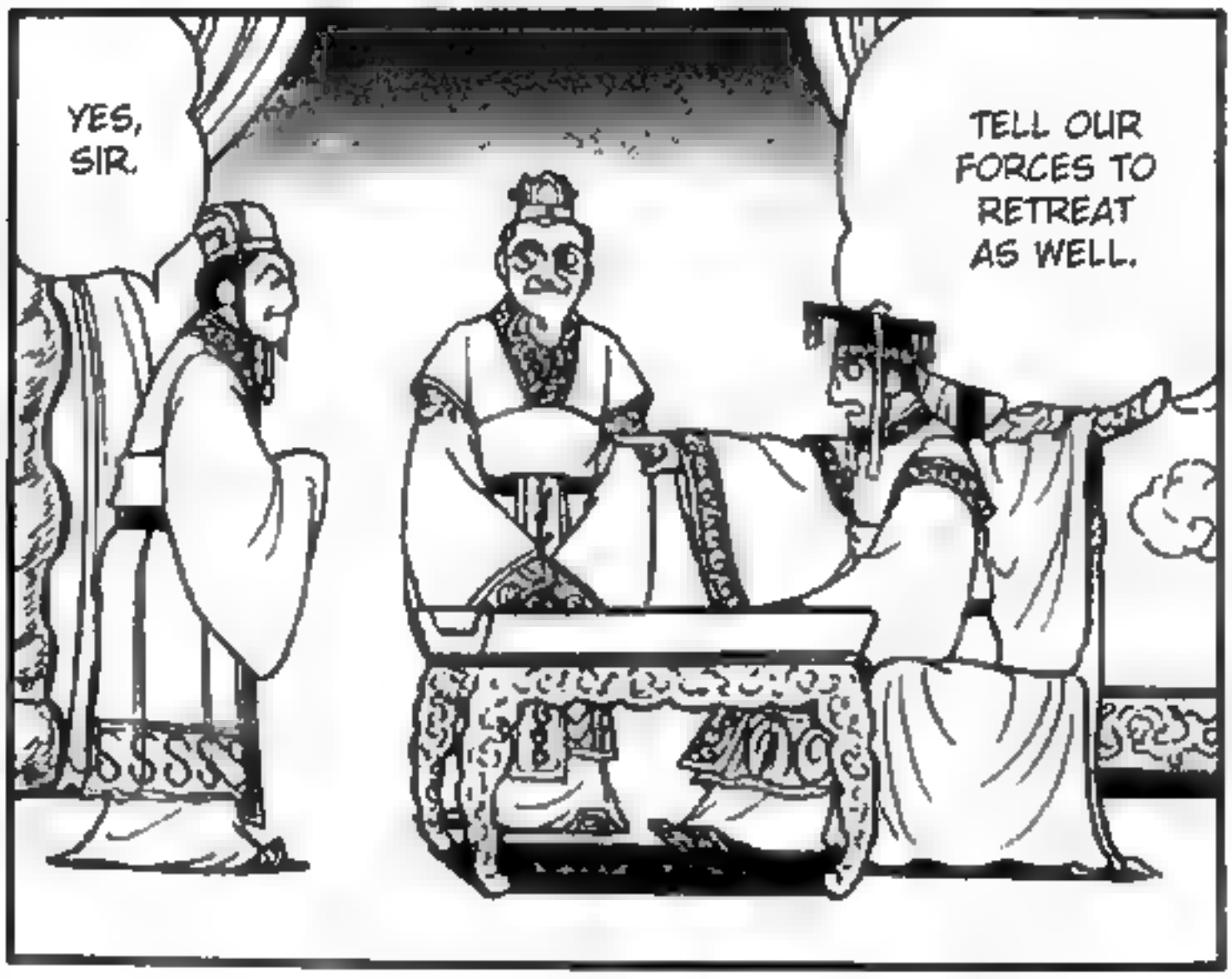
TRUE TO KONGMING'S PREDICTION, MENG DA FAKED AN ILLNESS TO AVOID A FIGHT WITH HIS CLOSE FRIEND LI YAN

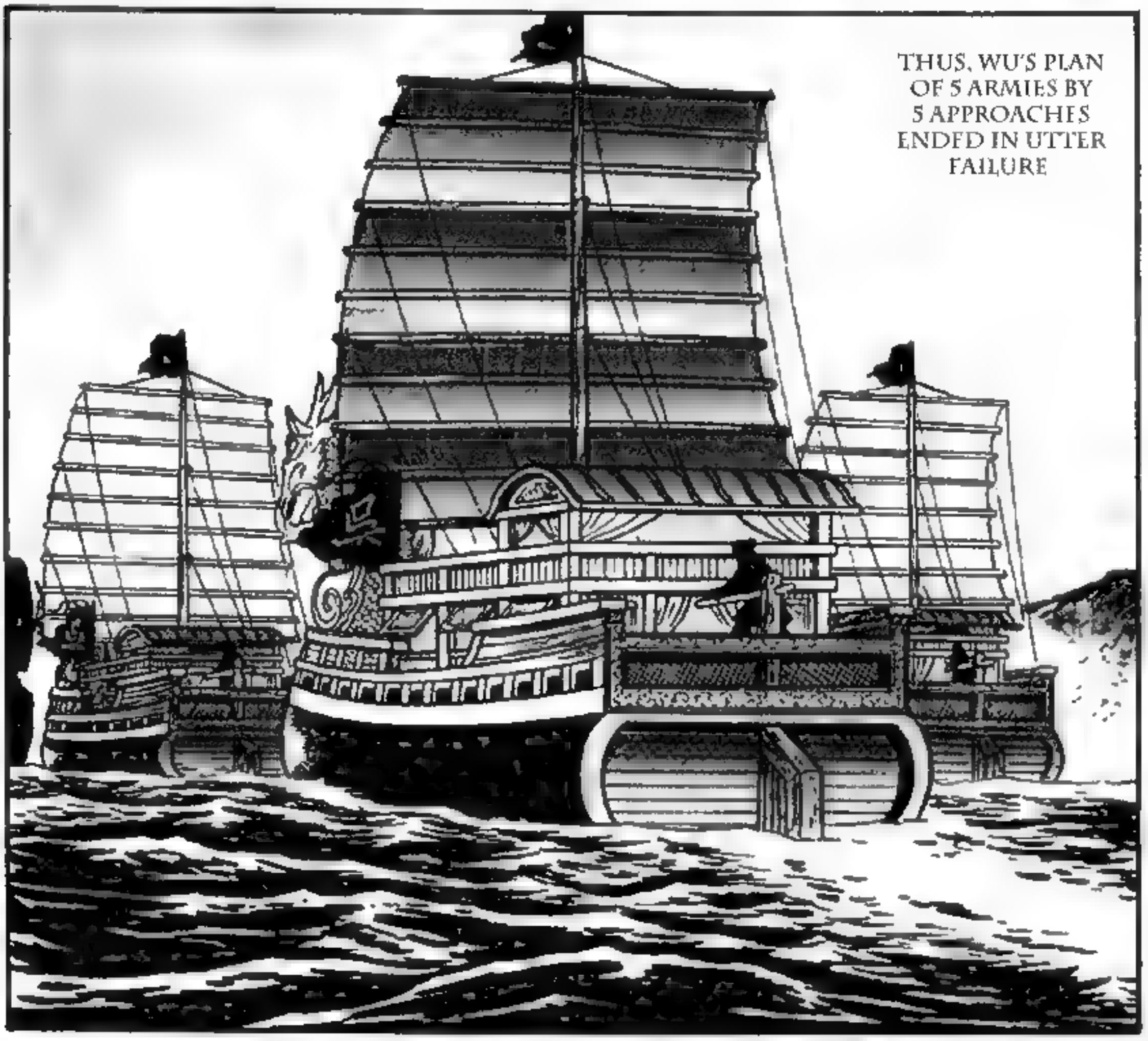
CAO ZHEN FOUND YANGPING PASS FIELD BY ZHAO ZILONG MUCH TOO DIFFICULT TO CAPTURE AND HAD RETREATED ALL THE WAY TO XIE VALLEY

YES.

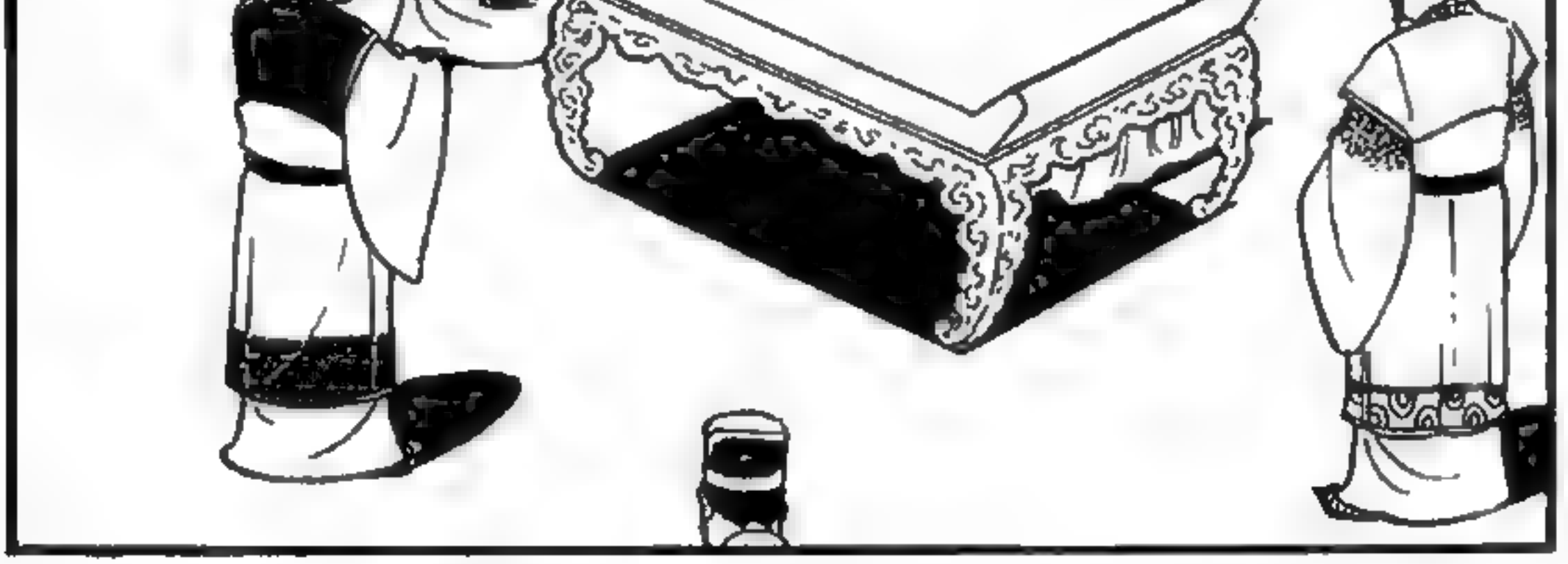
ALL 4 ARMIES WERE SWIFTLY DEFEATED!?


YES, SIR.
TELL OUR FORCES TO RETREAT AS WELL.

IT'S A GOOD THING I LISTENED TO LU XUN. RASHLY ATTACKING SHU WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN A PAINFUL DEFEAT.


THUS, WU'S PLAN OF 5 ARMIES BY 5 APPROACHES ENDED IN UTTER FAILURE

JIANYE
YES, HOW DOES YOUR HIGHNESS WISH TO RECEIVE HIM?
AN ENVOY FROM SHU?

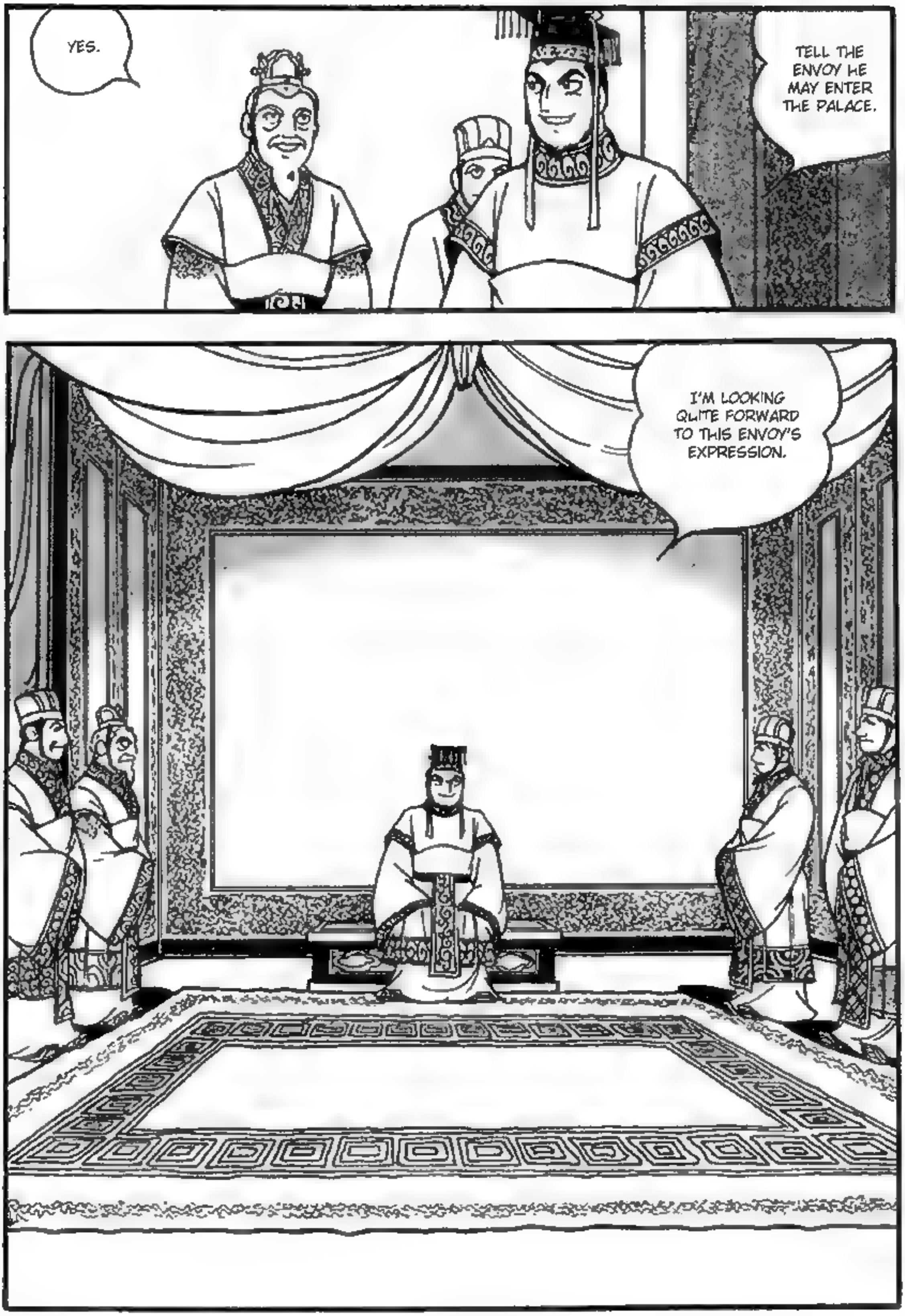

WHAT WOULD BE THE BEST WAY TO RECEIVE HIM THEN?
YES.
THIS IS CLEARLY KONGMING'S ATTEMPT TO MAKE SURE WE DO NOT JOIN HANDS WITH WEI AGAIN.

SET UP A CAULDRON FULL OF BOILING OIL IN THE COURT AND HAVE GUARDS LINED UP ON BOTH SIDES OF THE PALACE PASSAGE.

AH, YES!

LET US TEST THIS ENVOY'S METTLE SO THAT HE THINKS TWICE BEFORE HE DARES TO DECEIVE US WITH SWEET WORDS.

YES, THIS MUCH SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO SCARE ANY NORMAL MAN OUT OF HIS WITS.
WILL THIS DO, ZHANG ZHAO?

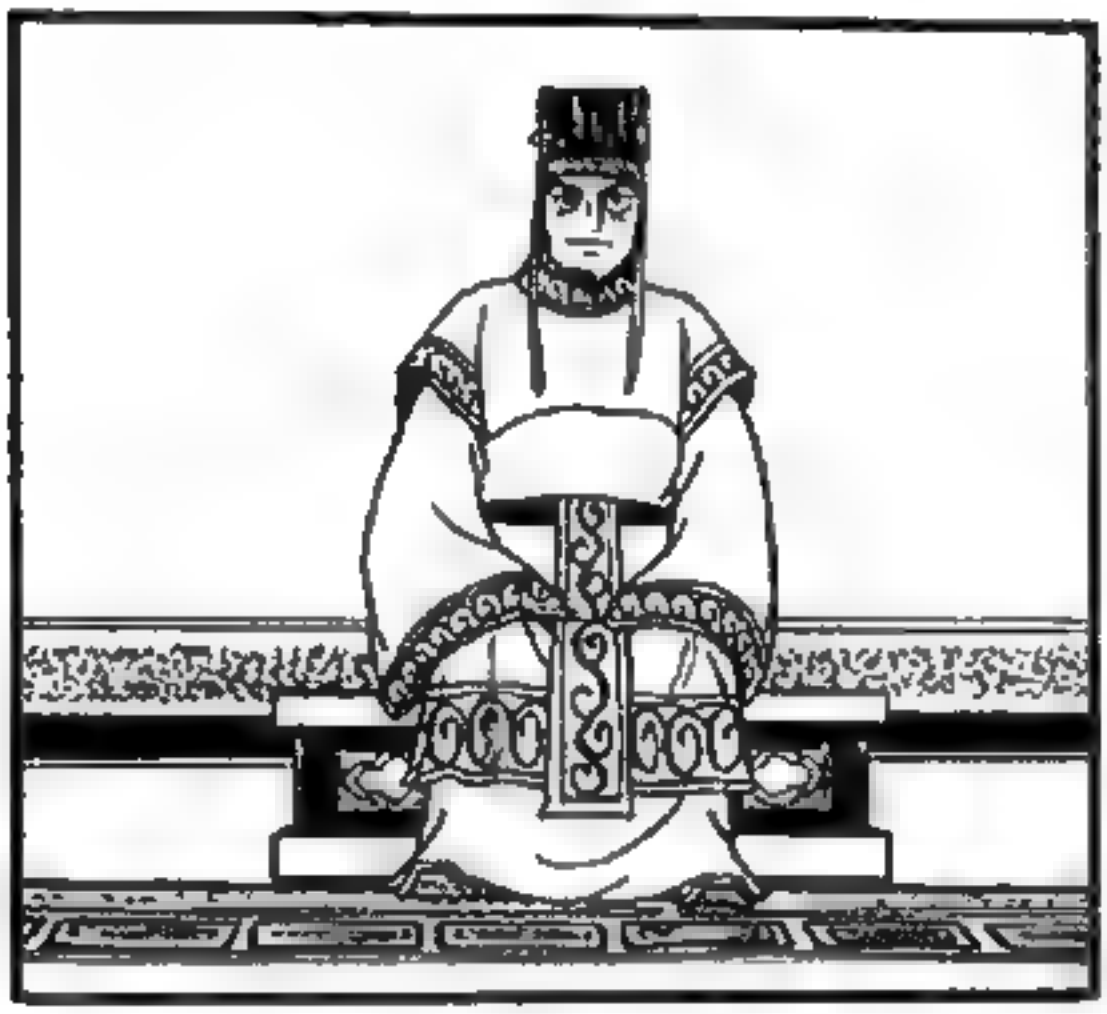

YES.
TELL THE ENVOY HE MAY ENTER THE PALACE.
I'M LOOKING QUITE FORWARD TO THIS ENVOY'S EXPRESSION.

AH, GOOD.

THE KING OF WU HAS AGREED TO SEE WITH YOU NOW.

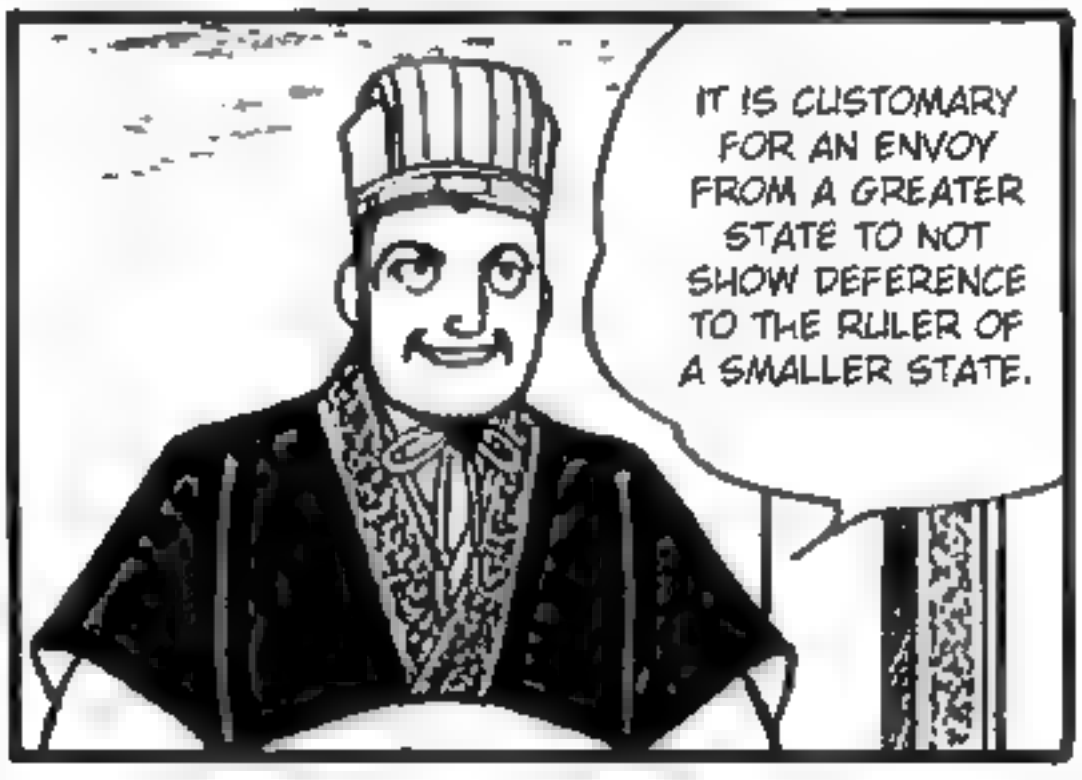
HM?

HA, QUITE AN IMPRESSION HE'S PUTTING UP...



HOW DARE YOU BRAZENLY WALK UP TO ME WITHOUT OBEISANCE!

WHAT!?


IT IS CUSTOMARY FOR AN ENVOY FROM A GREATER STATE TO NOT SHOW DEFERENCE TO THE RULER OF A SMALLER STATE.

Ist
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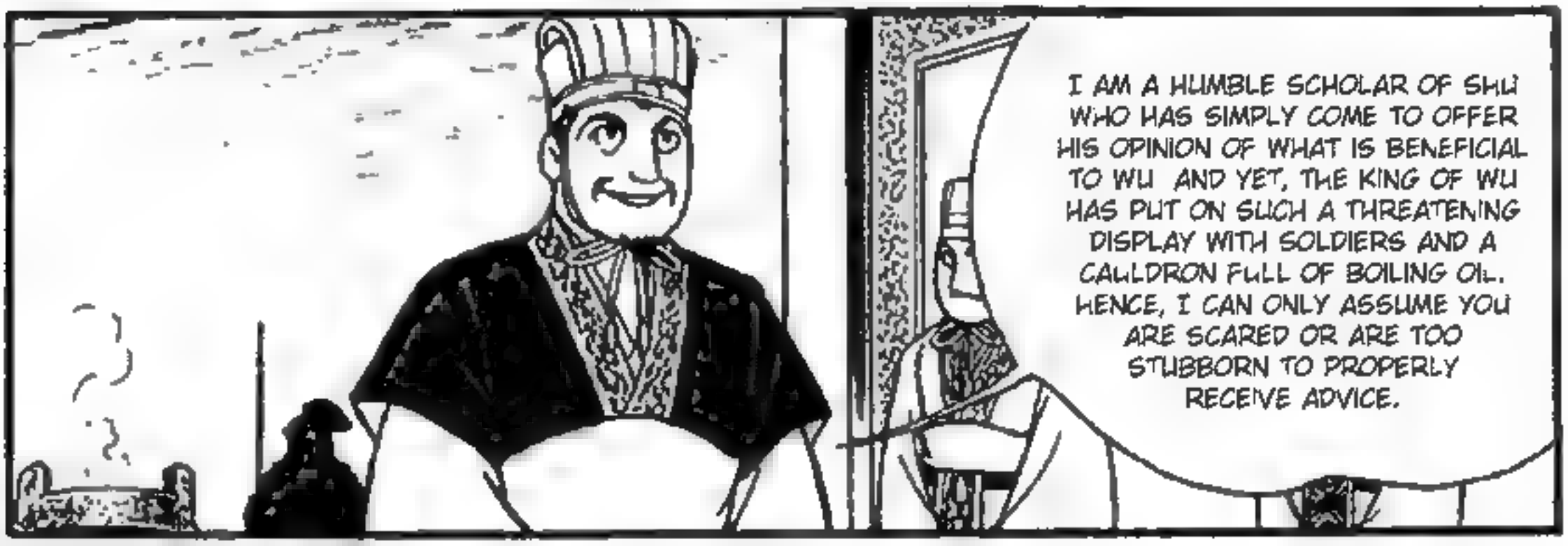
Ist

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN PERSUADE ME WITH YOUR ARTFUL TONGUE ALONE, YOU WILL SOON FIND YOURSELF IN THAT CAULDRON.

SILENCE! YOU THINK I AM ACTUALLY FRIGHTENED BY YOU OR YOUR WORDS!?

I'VE HEARD THERE ARE AS MANY WISE SCHOLARS IN WU AS THERE ARE STARS, SO IT IS BAFFLING THAT THE KING OF WU IS FRIGHTENED BY THE TONGUE OF ONE SCHOLAR.

I ALREADY KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE COME HERE TO SAY! YOU'VE COME TO SEE TO IT THAT WE REJECT FRIENDSHIP WITH WEI AND MEND TIES WITH SHU AGAIN!


I AM A HUMBLE SCHOLAR OF SHU WHO HAS SIMPLY COME TO OFFER HIS OPINION OF WHAT IS BENEFICIAL TO WU AND YET, THE KING OF WU HAS PUT ON SUCH A THREATENING DISPLAY WITH SOLDIERS AND A CAULDRON FULL OF BOILING OIL. HENCE, I CAN ONLY ASSUME YOU ARE SCARED OR ARE TOO STUBBORN TO PROPERLY RECEIVE ADVICE.

HMPH, I SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED YOU TO BE ABLE TO TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF A DANGER-OUS SITUATION IF KONGMING CHOSE YOU AS AN ENVOY.

AH-

DISMISS THE GUARDS.

YES, I HAVE COME TO TELL YOU WHICH IS THE BETTER PARTNER, WEI OR SHU.

SO YOU THINK A FORE GNER LIKE YOU CAN POINT OUT WHAT'S BEST FOR WU?

IF YOU CONTINUE YOUR FORMER RELATIONSHIP AS A NOMINAL VASSAL TO WEI, IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE WEI MAKES HEAVIER AND HEAVIER DEMANDS, SUCH AS TAKING YOUR HEIR HOSTAGE AT THE WEI CAPITAL.

GO ON THEN. LET'S HEAR YOUR SPIEL.

TRUE, BUT SHU IS HARDLY A BENEFICIAL PARTNER EITHER. WITH LIU BEI DEAD AND A 17 YEAR OLD BOY AT THE THRONE, I CAN HARDLY EXPECT HIM TO SECURE HIS OWN TERRITORY, MUCH LESS HELP SECURE MY LANDS AS WELL.

BUT IF YOU REJECT THE RELATIONSHIP, WEI WILL SEEK TO FORCIBLY SUBJUGATE YOU. IN DOING SO, THEY MAY EVEN ASK SHU FOR ASSISTANCE, AND IF WE WERE TO ACCEPT, WU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND BOTH WEI AND SHU.

SIMILARLY, WU HAS MANY MEN OF TALENT AND THE YANGTZE RIVER AND ITS BRANCHING STREAMS OFFER AN IDEAL DEFENCE. IF WE JOIN HANDS, EVEN WEI, THE MOST POWERFUL OF THE THREE STATES, WILL FALL.

OUR EMPEROR MAY BE YOUNG, BUT HE HAS THE GUIDANCE OF THE MASTER STRATEGIST ZHUGE LIANG AND THE NATURAL DEFENCES THAT SHU'S MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS OFFER. WE WILL NOT FALL EASILY AS CAO PI'S RECENT FAILED ATTEMPT SHOWED.

I JUDGE FROM YOUR COUNTENANCE THAT YOU SUSPECT MY INTENTIONS AND THINK OF ME AS TRYING TO PLAY YOU FOR A FOOL.

HMM...

SO IF YOU STILL REFUSE TO BELIEVE ME, ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE THAT MY WORDS ARE NOT HOLLOW.

BUT BELIEVE ME, SIR, THAT I SINCERELY BELIEVE IT BENEFITS BOTH SHU AND WU TO MAKE PEACE AND BE FRIENDS. I HAVE RISKED MY LIFE ON THE SUCCESS OF THIS MISSION.

AH!

HM?

AGHH! STOP HIM!

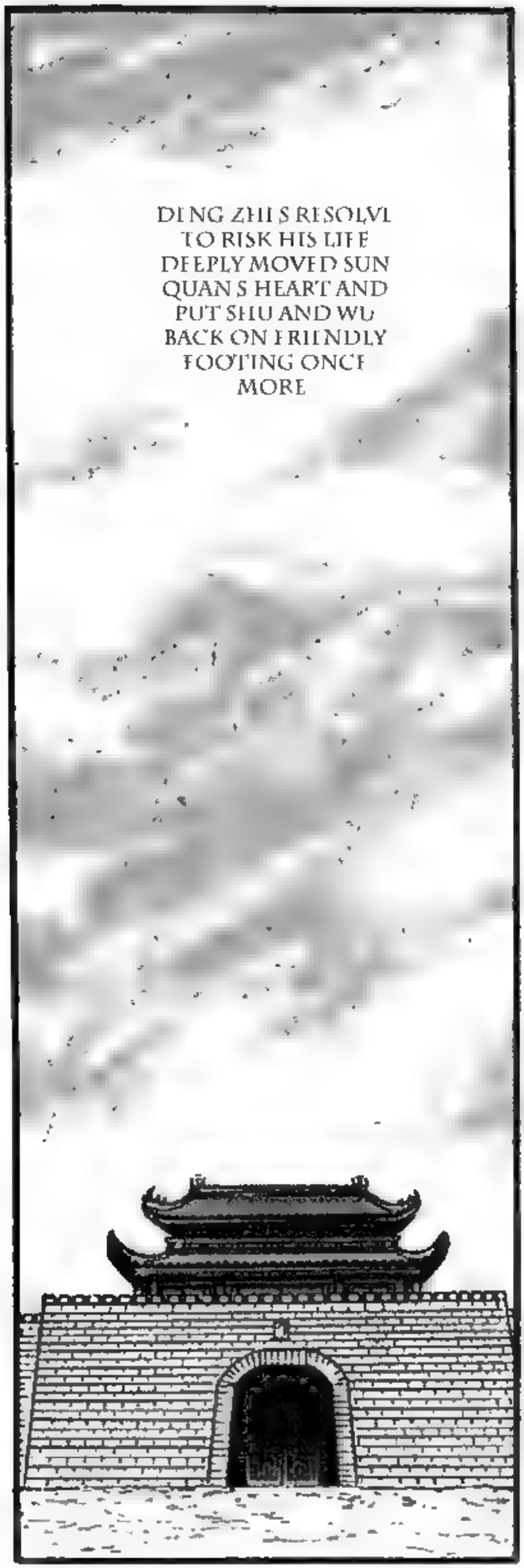
I WILL WILLINGLY THROW MYSELF INTO THIS CAULDRON FULL OF BOILING OIL TO SHOW THAT I AM NOT HERE TO SELL SNAKE OIL BUT TO MAKE A GENUINE OFFER OF FRIENDSHIP!

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, SIR!?

YOU DO, SIR?

FINE! I UNDER-STAND!

DENG ZHI'S RESOLVE TO RISK HIS LIFE DEEPLY MOVED SUN QUAN'S HEART AND PUT SHU AND WU BACK ON FRIENDLY FOOTING ONCE MORE



IT SEEMS SHU IS INDEED A CAPABLE STATE TO FORM A PARTNERSHIP WITH.
WITH AN ENVOY WILLING TO RISK HIS LIFE SO AS TO NOT SHAME HIS STATE AND A CHANCELLOR WHO CAN PICK OUT SUCH TALENTS,
THANK YOU, SIR.
I WILL HAVE A LONG TALK WITH MY MINISTERS SO THAT THEY TOO WILL COME AROUND TO YOUR VIEWS.
YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.
SERVE THIS MAN RESPECTFULLY WHILE HE'S HERE IN THE CAPITAL.

FLOATING FORTRESS

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.

WHAT!? SHU AND WU HAVE MADE AN ALLIANCE AGAIN!?

AS UNEXPECTED AS THIS DEVELOPMENT IS, THE SHU ENVOY DENG ZHI AND THE WU ENVOY ZHANG WEN HAVE TRAVELLED TO EACH OTHER'S CAPITAL TO CONFIRM THE ALLIANCE. WE ARE QUITE CERTAIN OF THIS REPORT.

THAT CAN'T BE! LAST I HEARD FROM SUN QUAN, HE SAID HE WAS MOVING HIS ARMIES UP THE YANGTZE RIVER TO ATTACK SHU.

MNN...

HOW DARE THAT SUN QUAN!

SO THAT EXPLAINS WHY THEY NEVER ACTUALLY ATTACKED. THEY WERE MERELY PRETENDING TO WHILE MAKING DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS BEHIND MY BACK.

PLEASE WAIT, YOUR MAJESTY!

I WILL NOT ALLOW THEM TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE! I SHALL ATTACK WU AT ONCE AND DEAL WITH SHU LATER!

IT'S CLEAR THAT THEIR ALLIANCE IS ONE MEANT TO BE HOSTILE TOWARDS WEI! IN TIME, THEY WILL RAISE ARMIES TO ATTACK US ON ALL SIDES!

WHAT? WAIT A WHOLE DECADE!?

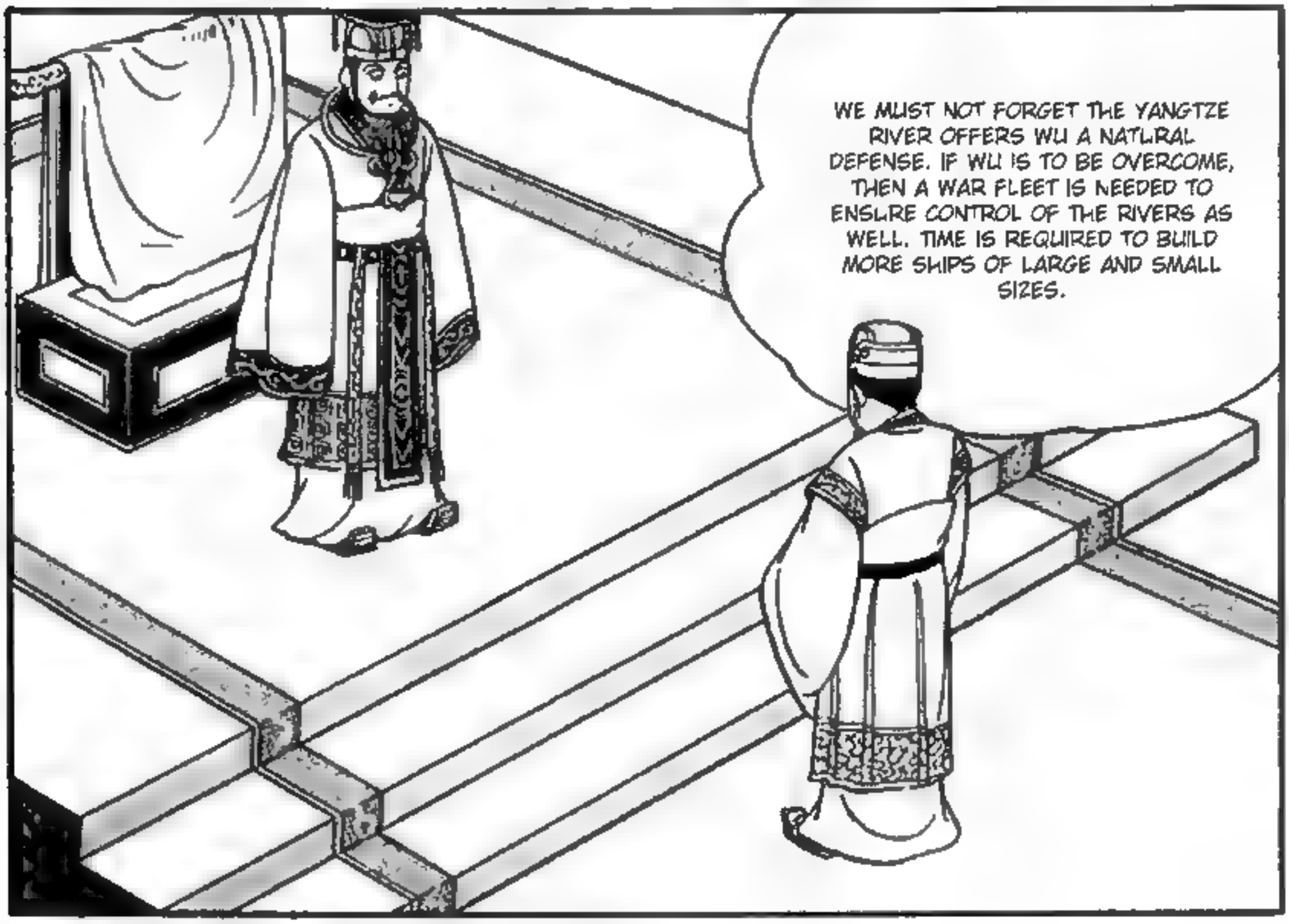
THE ATTACK BY 5 APPROACHES HAS FAILED ONLY RECENTLY, AND IT IS TOO TAXING UPON OUR RESOURCES TO RAISE ANOTHER LARGE ARMY SO SOON. I ADVISE WAITING JUST 10 YEARS TO BUILD UP AN OVERWHELMING ADVANTAGE IN MANPOWER AND SUPPLIES OF GRAIN, WHICH WE CAN THEN BRING TO BEAR UPON WU AND ACHIEVE A DECISIVE VICTORY.

.....

ARE YOU MAD!? DID YOU NOT HEAR THAT WU AND SHU HAVE SIGNED AN ALLIANCE!? IF I WAIT 10 YEARS, THEN THAT'S 10 YEARS FOR WU AND SHU TO ALSO MAKE THE REQUIRED PREPARATIONS TO ATTACK US!

PLEASE WAIT, YOUR MAJESTY.

MOBILIZE MY ARMIES AT ONCE!


WE MUST NOT FORGET THE YANGTZE RIVER OFFERS WU A NATURAL DEFENSE. IF WU IS TO BE OVERCOME, THEN A WAR FLEET IS NEEDED TO ENSURE CONTROL OF THE RIVERS AS WELL. TIME IS REQUIRED TO BUILD MORE SHIPS OF LARGE AND SMALL SIZES.

MORE MUST BE BUILT, YOUR MAJESTY.

YOU MEAN TO SAY THE FLEET OF 2000 SHIPS I ALREADY HAVE IS NOT ENOUGH!?

FINE, I WILL ORDER THE CONSTRUCTION OF 1000 MORE SHIPS.

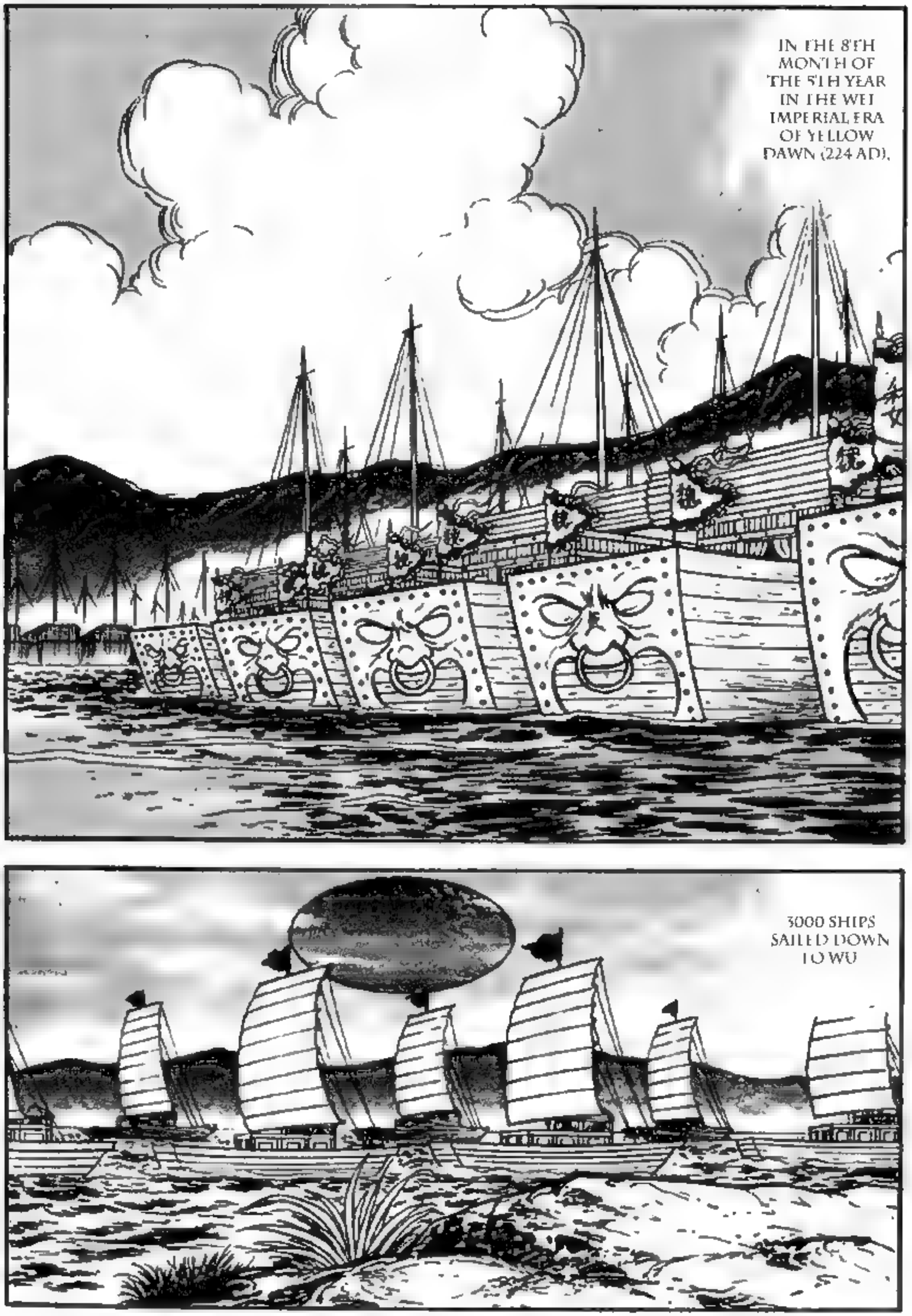
HMM...

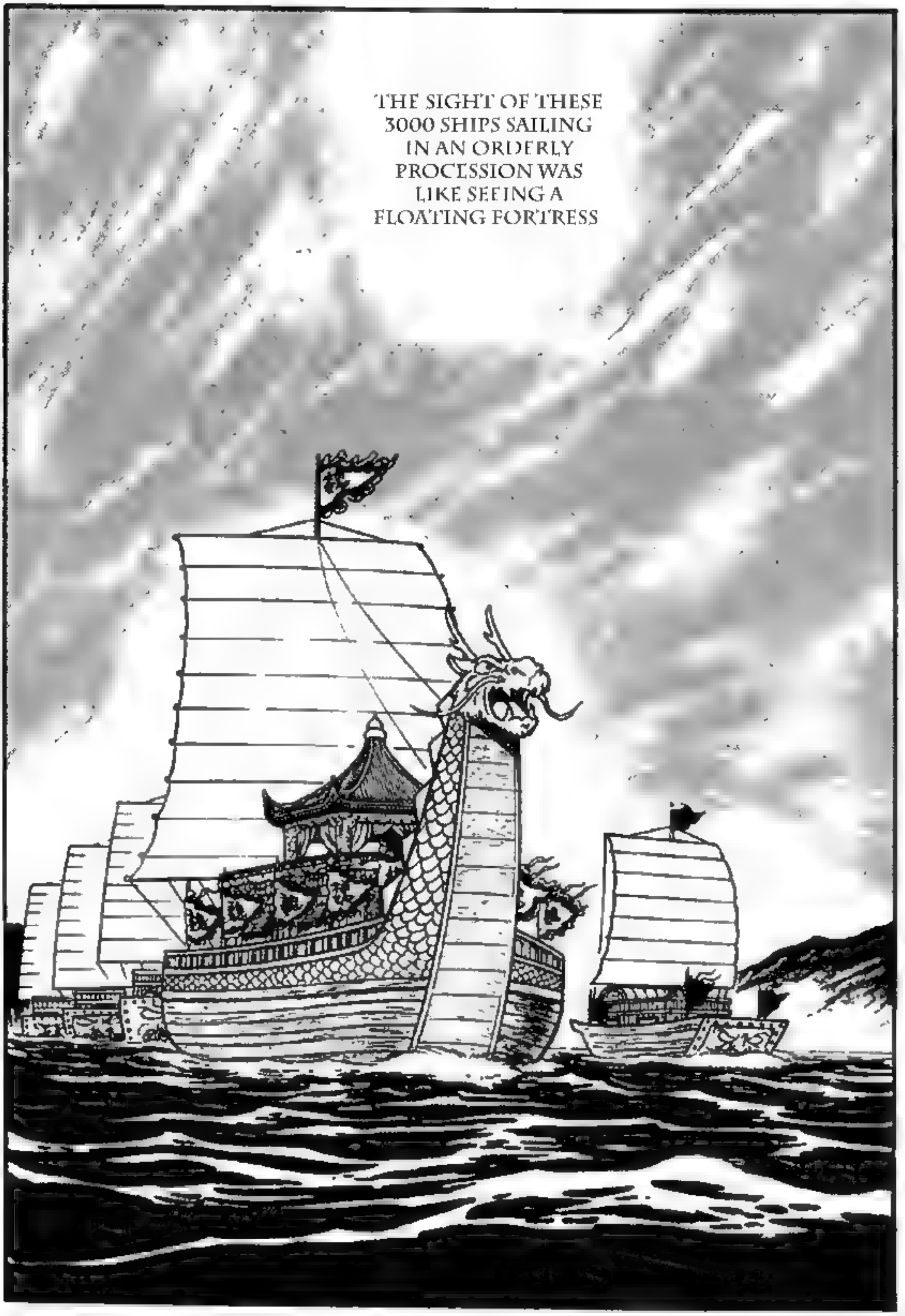
OF COURSE.

BUT I WANT ALL THE SHIPYARDS IN WEI WORKING NIGHT AND DAY TO COMPLETE THE SHIPS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

WORKMEN CROWDED THE WEI SHIPYARDS TO BUILD THE SHIPS

CAO PI'S FLAG SHIP WAS A MONSTROUS SHIP ADORNED WITH A DRAGON'S HEAD AND OVER 200 SPANS IN LENGTH TO ACCOMMODATE 2000 MARINES ONBOARD


IN THE 8TH MONTH OF THE 5TH YEAR IN THE WEI IMPERIAL ERA OF YELLOW DAWN (224 AD),
3000 SHIPS SAILED DOWN TO WU


THE SIGHT OF THESE
3000 SHIPS SAILING
IN AN ORDERLY
PROCESSION WAS
LIKE SEEING A
FLOATING FORTRESS

NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE NEWS THREW THE WU COURT INTO PANIC ONCE MORE

YES...

3000 SHIPS AND 300,000 WEI TROOPS ARE MARCHING SOUTH TO ATTACK US!?

THE FUTURE OF WU IS AT STAKE. WHO HAS ANY WISE ADVICE TO OFFER?

I NEVER EXPECTED CAO PI TO LAUNCH ANOTHER HUGE WAR SO SOON...

EXACTLY! WE MUST ASK KONGMING TO SEND HIS ARMIES TO WEI'S WEST AND MOVE IN ON CHANG'AN!

IT IS OUR ALLIANCE WITH SHU THAT HAS PROVOKED CAO PI TO ATTACK. THUS, SHU HAS AN OBLIGATION TO HELP US IN THIS TIME OF GREAT NEED.

SUMMON LU XUN TO COURT AT ONCE!

THAT MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH TO STOP THE 300,000 ENEMY TROOPS BEARING DOWN ON OUR BORDERS

HMM... THEN WHAT CAN I DO...?

YOUR HIGHNESS, LU XUN'S PRESENCE IS REQUIRED TO SECURE JINGZHOU. HE MUST NOT BE MOVED WHENEVER IT IS CONVENIENT FOR US, LEST WE TEMPT XIAHOU SHANG INTO ATTACKING JINGZHOU.

XU SHENG...

YOUR HIGHNESS! AS CAPABLE AS LU XUN IS, DO YOU THINK SO LITTLE OF THE REST OF YOUR OFFICERS!?

I MAY NOT BE QUITE AS TALENTED, BUT IF YOU WOULD GRANT ME THE COMMAND OF AN ARMY, I PROMISE I WILL CRUSH THE WEI ARMY AND SHOW CAO PI TO NEVER UNDERESTIMATE US AGAIN! IF I DO NOT FULFIL THIS PROMISE, I WILL GLADLY OFFER MY HEAD TO THE CHOPPING BLOCK.

VERY WELL. IF YOU FEEL THAT CONFIDENT ABOUT IT, THEN I WILL HAVE NO ANXIETY ABOUT OUR FUTURE.

I PROMISE TO PROTECT JIANGNAN EVEN AT THE COST OF MY LIFE, YOUR HIGHNESS.

I HEREBY APPOINT YOU AS CHIEF COMMANDER OF ALL FORCES IN NANXU AND JIANYE.

WHEN I'M THROUGH WITH CAO PI, HE WILL NOT DARE TO EVEN LOOK SOUTH AGAIN!

WE MUST BAND TOGETHER AND WORK AS ONE MIND AND ONE BODY TO OVERCOME THIS ADVERSITY!

IF THIS WAR IS LOST, THEN WU IS LOST FOR GOOD! AND IF WU IS LOST, THEN SO ARE OUR LIVES AS WELL!

YES, SIR.

I WANT ALL GENERALS TO STOCK UP ON ARMS AND ARMOUR AND DEFEND THEIR POSTS WHILE WAITING FOR FURTHER ORDERS FROM ME.

WHAT!?

I DISAGREE WITH THAT IDEA, COMMANDER.

OUR HIGHNESS HAS GIVEN YOU THE COMMAND OF OUR FORCES TO DESTROY THE INVADING ARMY AND TAKE CAO PI CAPTIVE. THUS, WE MUST QUICKLY MEET THE ENEMY CHALLENGE BY SAILING TO THE SOUTH OF RIVER HUAI WHERE THE ENEMY FLEET IS CURRENTLY SAILING TO.

SUN SHAO! YOU MAY BE THE NEPHEW OF OUR HIGHNESS BUT YOU DARE DISAGREE WITH YOUR COM-MANDER?

WE WILL WAIT UNTIL THE ENEMY SHIPS HAVE ALL ARRIVED AT THE NORTHERN COAST OF THE YANGTZE RIVER SO WE CAN DESTROY THEIR NAVY IN ONE FELL SWOOP.

NO, THE WEI FORCES ARE TOO LARGE AND LED BY MANY CAPABLE OFFICERS. THEIR ARMY WILL NOT CRUMBLE FROM A FEW SMALL RAIDS. IT IS NOT TO OUR ADVANTAGE TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.

HOW CAN ANY OF OUR CITIZENS BELIEVE WE'RE COMMITTED TO DEFENDING WU WHEN WE FREELY ALLOW THE WU FLEET TO SAIL UP OUR RIVERS!? SUCH A MEEK AND PASSIVE STRATEGY WILL ONLY DEMORALIZE THE MEN!

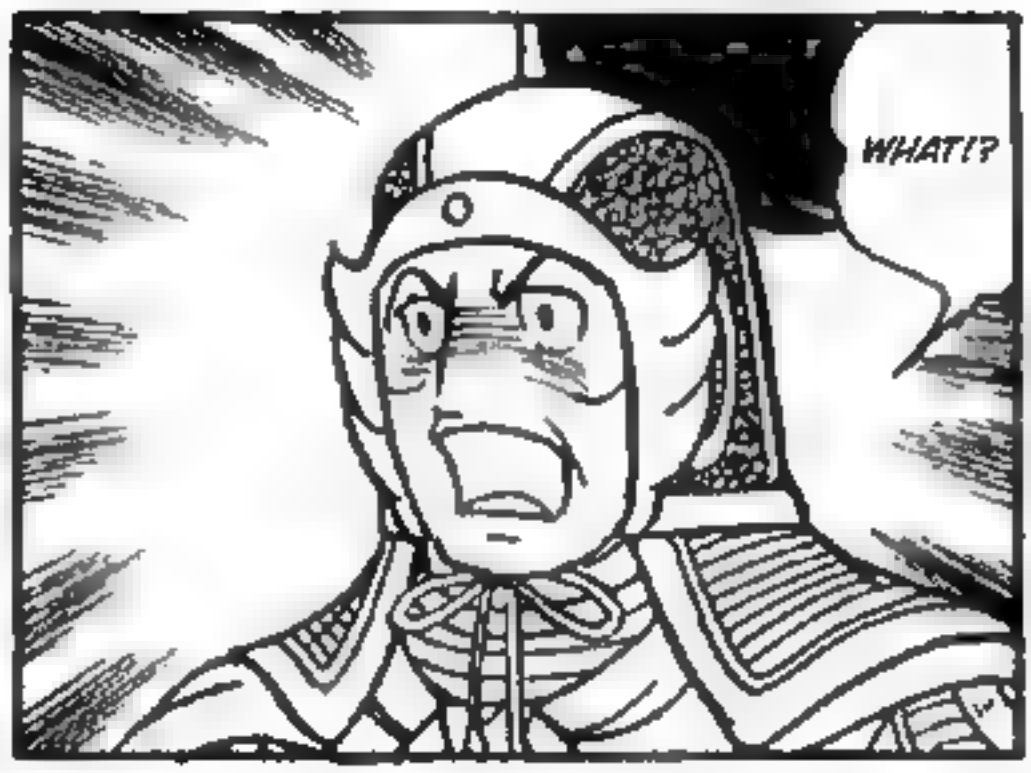
ABSOLUTELY NOT! I WILL NOT RISK ANY PART OF OUR ARMY FOR SUCH A RISKY ENDEAVOUR!

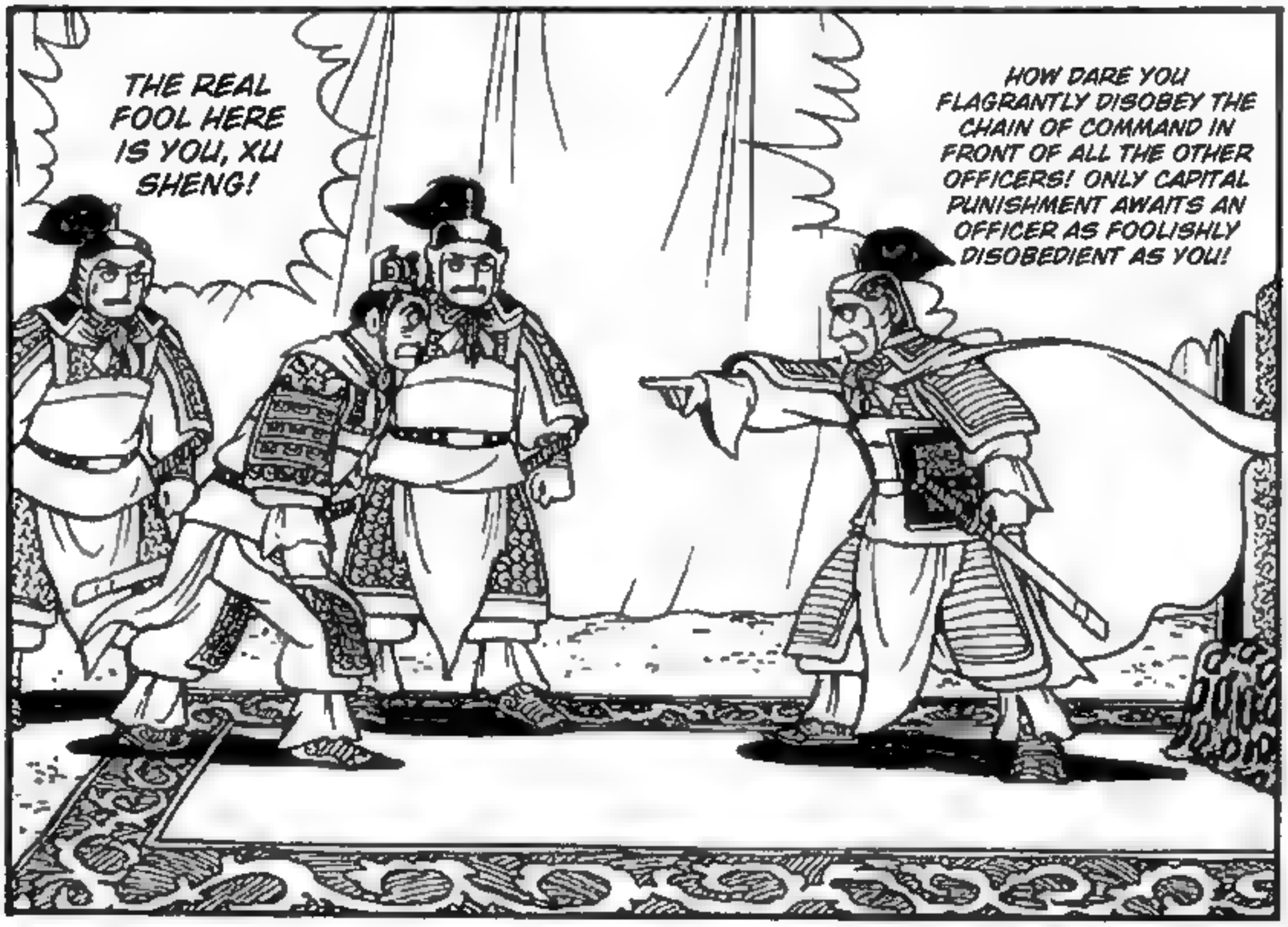
THEN AT LEAST ALLOW ME TO LEAD SOME TROOPS ACROSS THE RIVER AND ATTACK THE ENEMIES.

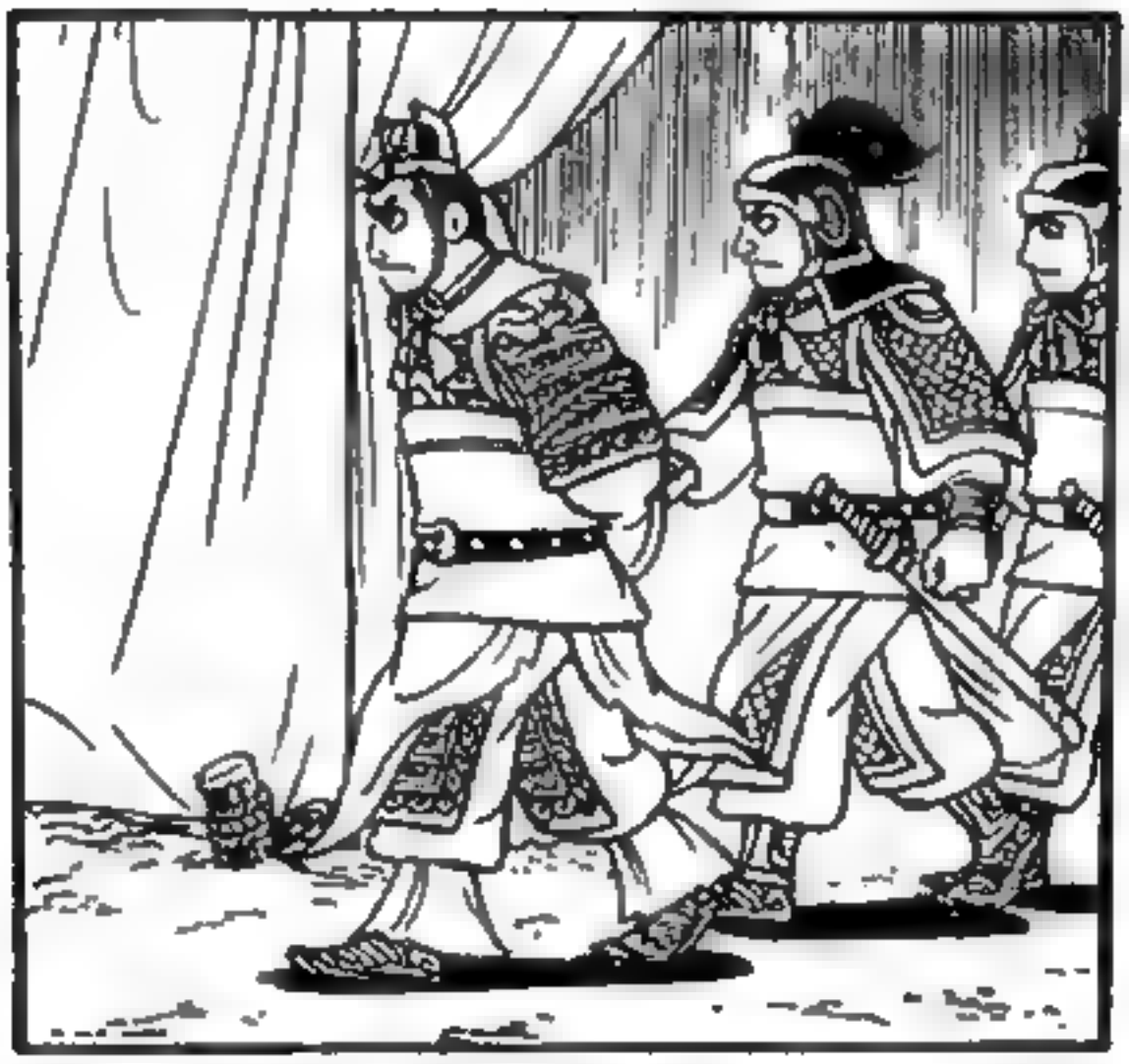
I WILL ACT AS I SEE FIT, WITH OR WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION.

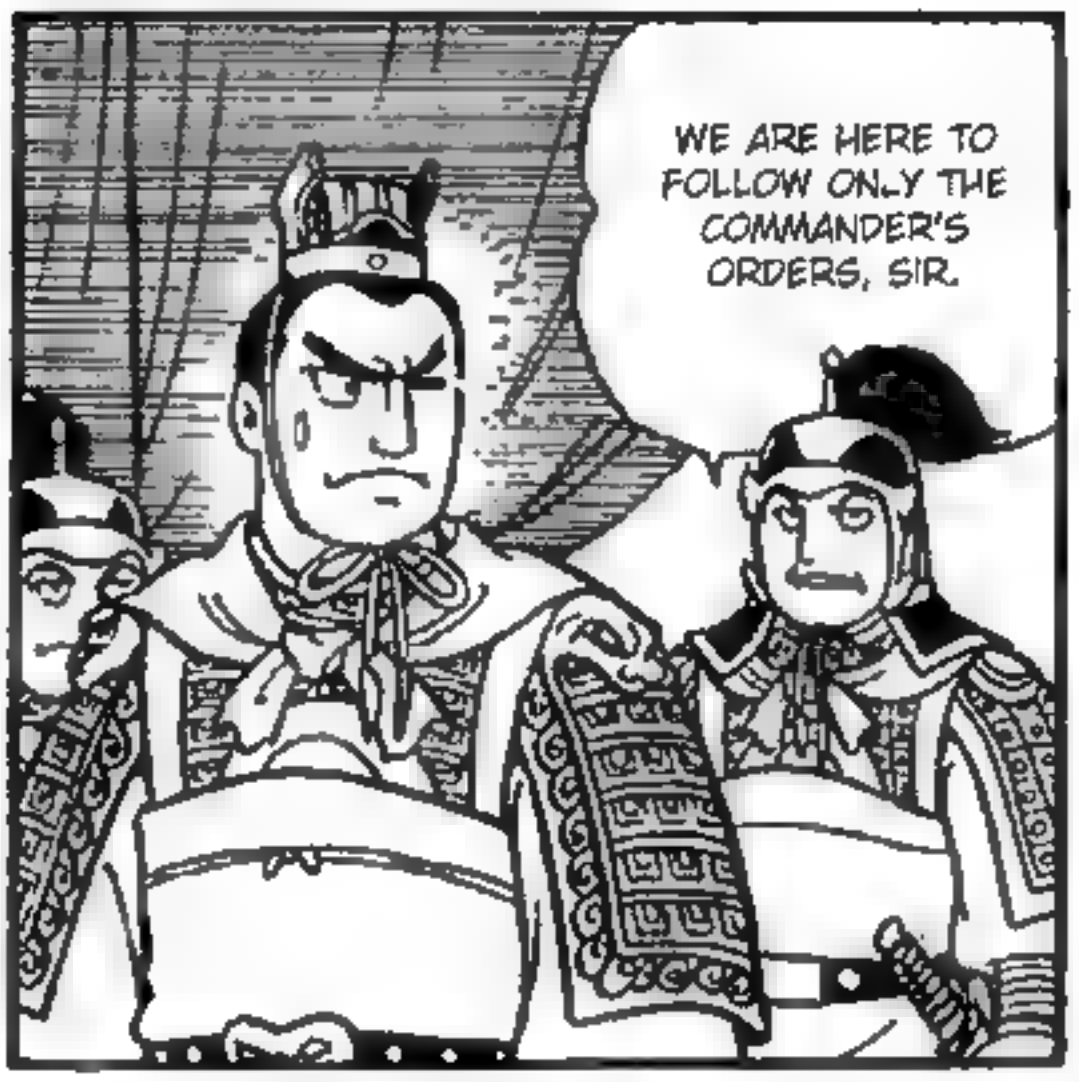
I AM THE COMMANDER HERE! I WILL NOT ALLOW ANY INDEPENDENT ACTION! THE ARMY MUST ACT AS A UNIFIED WHOLE!

ARREST SUN SHAO AND EXECUTE HIM!


WHAT!?


THE REAL FOOL HERE IS YOU, XU SHENG!
HOW DARE YOU FLAGRANTLY DISOBEY THE CHAIN OF COMMAND IN FRONT OF ALL THE OTHER OFFICERS! ONLY CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AWAITS AN OFFICER AS FOOLISHLY DISOBEDIENT AS YOU!




WE ARE HERE TO FOLLOW ONLY THE COMMANDER'S ORDERS, SIR.

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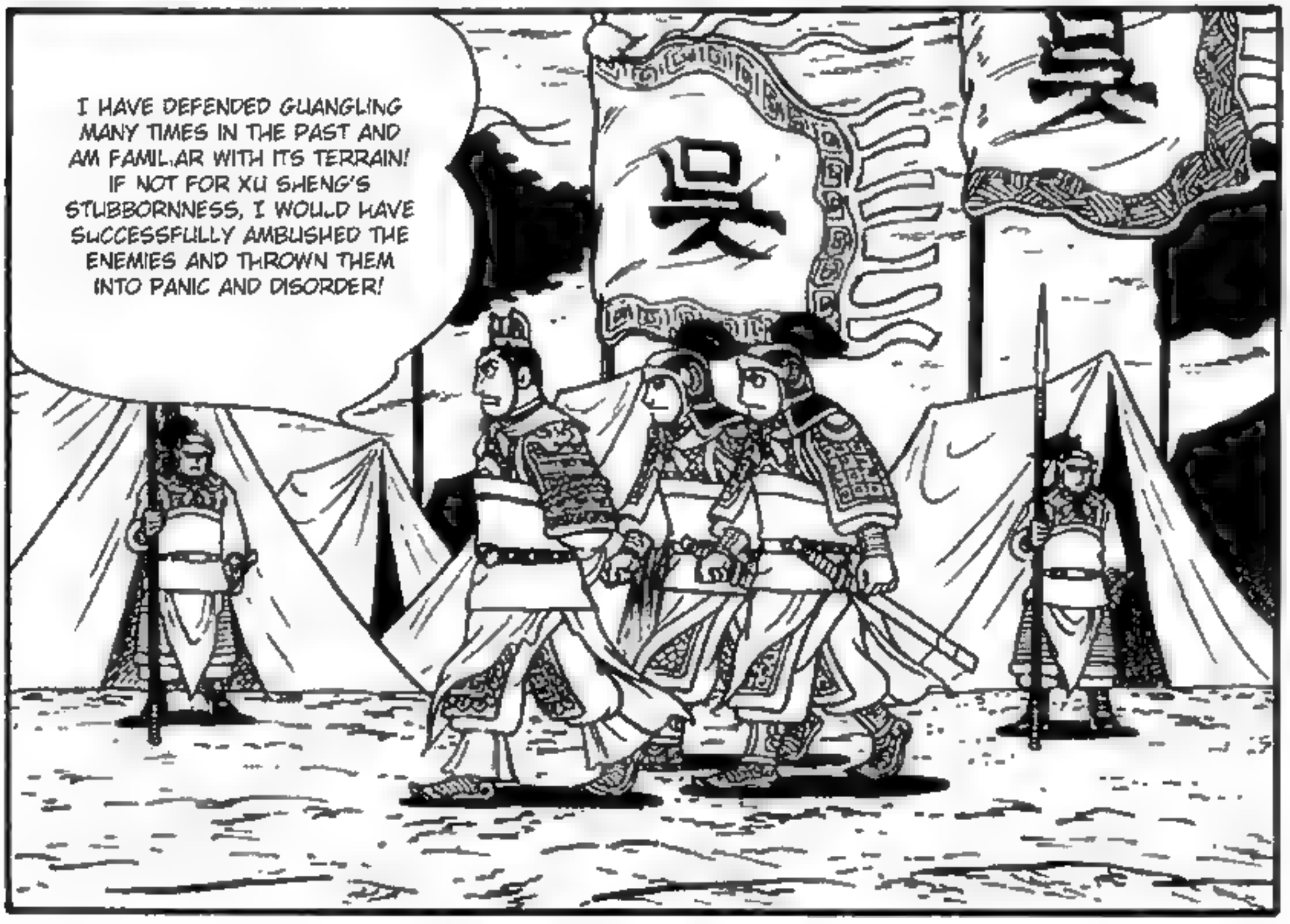
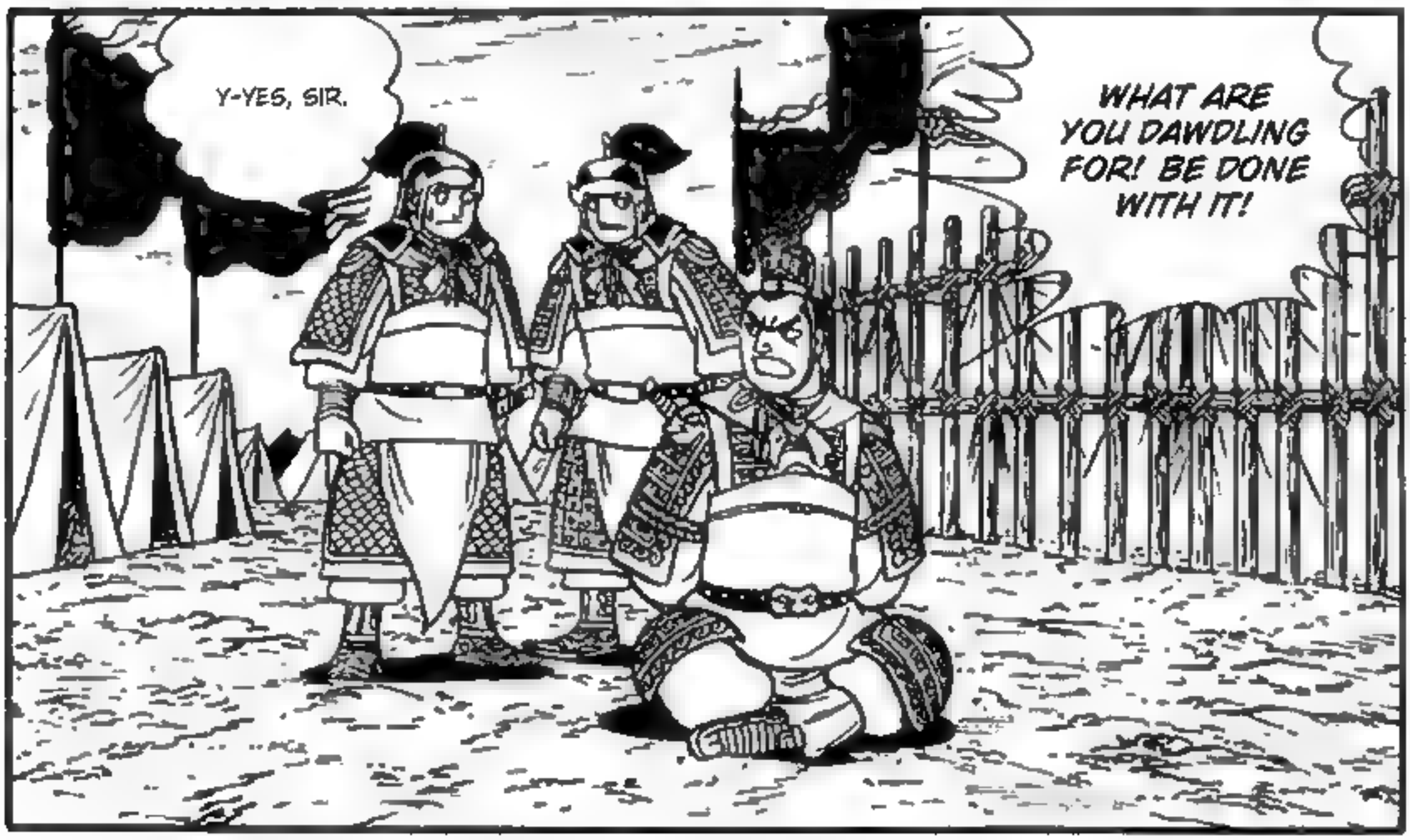

I HAVE DEFENDED GUANGLING MANY TIMES IN THE PAST AND AM FAMILIAR WITH ITS TERRAIN! IF NOT FOR XU SHENG'S STUBBORNNESS, I WOULD HAVE SUCCESSFULLY AMBUSHED THE ENEMIES AND THROWN THEM INTO PANIC AND DISORDER!
吳

BUT COM-
MANDER XU
SHENG DID
ORDER US...
W-WHAT DO WE DO?
THIS IS SUN SHAO,
NEPHEW TO THE
KING OF WU!

BUT IF THIS IS
THE FATE HEAVEN
HAS IN STORE
FOR ME, THEN I
WILL NOT FIGHT
IT! GO ON! CUT
OFF MY HEAD!

ME?
B-BUT I...

Y-YOU DO
IT THEN.

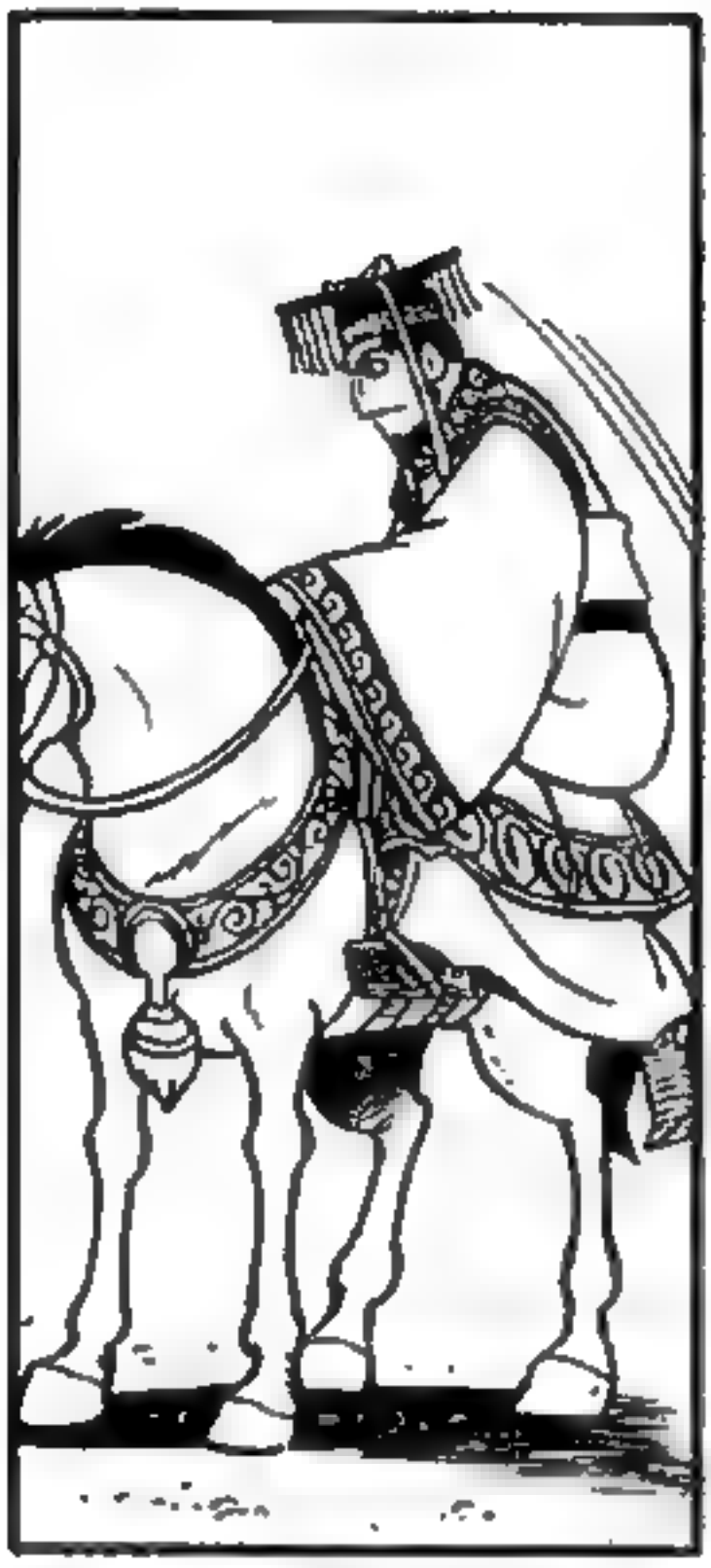

Y-YES, SIR.
WHAT ARE
YOU DAWDLING
FOR! BE DONE
WITH IT!

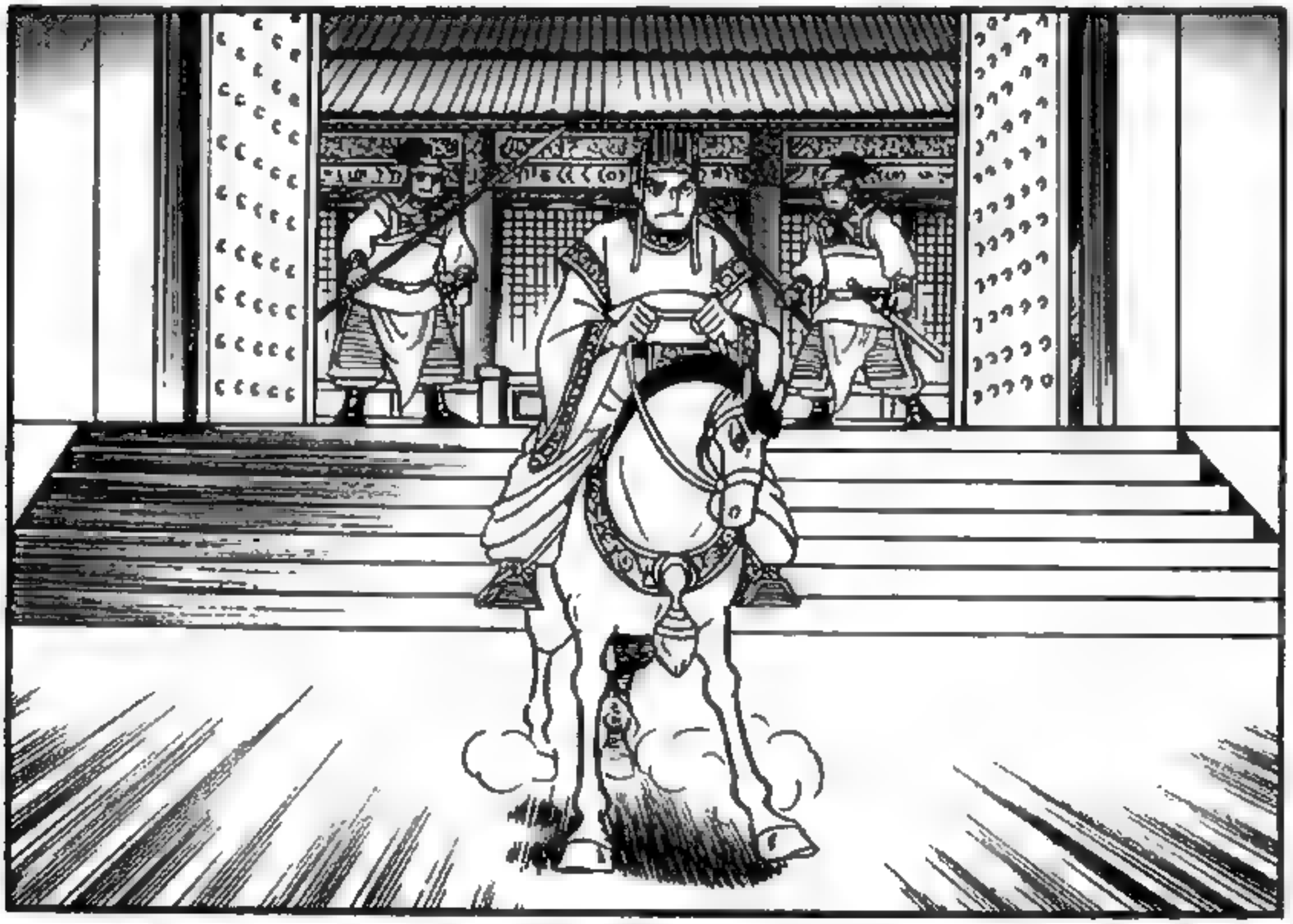
Y-YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.

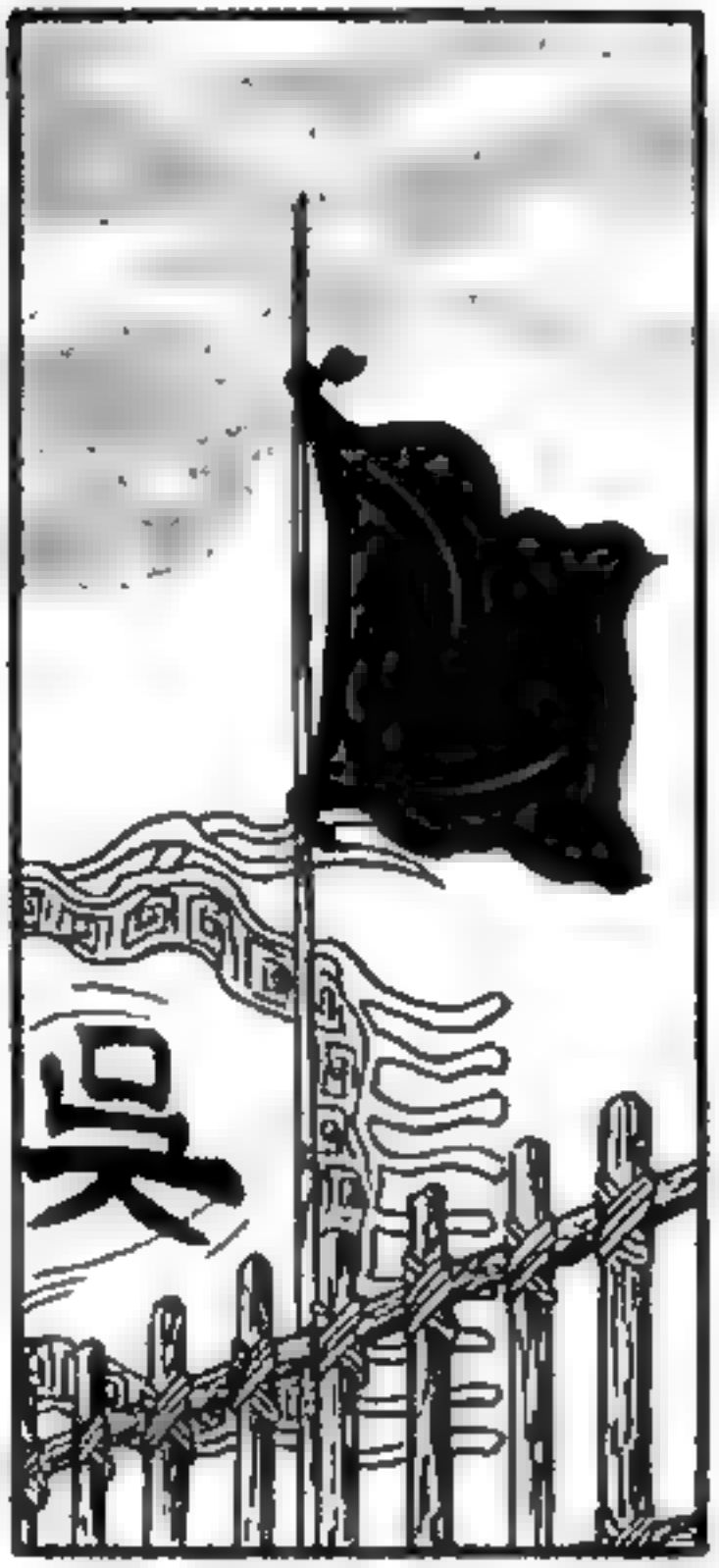
WHAT!? SUN SHAO IS TO BE EXECUTED!?

BRING ME MY HORSE!

THIS IS TERRIBLE!







HALT!
HALT THE
EXECUTION!

I DON'T WANT TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR IT EITHER!
I... I CAN'T DO THIS. YOU DO IT.

SUN SHAO! EXPLAIN THE SITUATION!

AHH!

YES, YOUR HIGH-NESS!

FOR DISAGREEING? ABOUT WHAT? TELL ME THE DETAILS.

I AM BEING PUT TO DEATH FOR DISAGREEING WITH COMMANDER XU SHENG!

I AM KNOWLEDGEABLE WITH GUANGLING'S TERRAIN. THUS, I ASKED TO CROSS THE RIVER AND ATTACK THE ENEMY ARMY MASSING THERE. OTHERWISE, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO CONCEN-TRATE THEIR FORCES WITH IMPUNITY AND SUCCESSFULLY CROSS THE RIVER TO OUR SIDE!

HM...
YES. SIMPLY WAITING FOR THE WEI ARMY TO CROSS THE RIVER WILL LEAD TO OUR DEFEAT.
SO YOU REQUESTED A PREE-MPTIVE RAID?
YES, SIR.
FINE, COME WITH ME. I'LL ASK XU SHENG TO HEAR THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY.

YOUR HIGHNESS?

YES, ABOUT THAT, XU SHENG... I'VE HEARD WHAT HAPPENED AND IT SEEMED SUN SHAO'S IMPATIENCE FOR YOUR MORE DEFENSIVE APPROACH STEMS NOT FROM DISRESPECT BUT HIS YOUTHFUL BOLDNESS COULD I ASK YOU TO OVER..OOK IT JUST THIS TIME?

SUN SHAO? YOU STILL HAVE NOT BEEN EXECUTED YET?

N-NO, THAT'S NOT QUITE WHAT I...

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, YOUR HIGHNESS HAS APPOINTED ME AS THE COMMANDER, DID YOU NOT!? ANY SUCCESSFUL GENERAL KNOWS THAT IT IS ONLY CUSTOMARY TO EXECUTE THOSE WHO DISOBEY RULES AND FLOUT THE CHAIN OF COMMAND! DO YOU ASK ME TO SIMPLY PLAY FAVOURITES AND EXCUSE SUN SHAO'S INSUBORDINANCE BECAUSE HE IS YOUR NEPHEW!?

DOES MY HIGHNESS REALLY DARE ASK ME TO VIOLATE SUCH SACROSANCT PRINCIPLES OF STATECRAFT AND THE ART OF WARFARE!?

LAWS DO NOT EXIST TO BENEFIT ME NOR YOUR HIGHNESS INDIVIDUALLY! THEY ARE TESTED AND PROVEN RULES MADE TO BENEFIT THE STATE AS A WHOLE!

YOU'RE COMPLETELY RIGHT THAT SUN SHAO IS IN THE WRONG .. BUT HE IS THE ADOPTED SON OF MY LATE BROTHER SUN CE AND I WOULD BE BREAKING MY FRATERNAL DUTIES IF I LET HIS SON DIE...

N-NO, I UNDER-STAND YOUR POINT...

BUT SUN SHAO! WILL YOU NOW FOLLOW MY ORDERS!?

Y-YOU'LL FORGIVE HIM!?

IF MY DECISION HAS PUT YOUR HIGHNESS IN A DIFFICULT MORAL QUANDARY, THEN I WILL FORGIVE THE OFFENSE THIS ONE TIME.

I REFUSE TO FOLLOW YOUR HOPELESS STRATEGY! I MAY BE BREAKING THE LAWS THROUGH MY DISOBEDIENCE, BUT I SWEAR I ONLY DO SO FOR THE PEACE AND PROPSERITY OF WU!

NO, I WILL NOT!

WHAT!

I REFUSE TO TAKE BACK MY WORDS AN ATTACK AT GUANGLING IS THE ONLY WAY TO DEFEAT THE WEI ARMY. I WILL NOT FOLLOW XU SHENG'S PLAN EVEN IF I'M TO BE PUT TO DEATH FOR IT!

YOU STUBBORN BOAR! SHUT YOUR MOUTH!

VERY WELL...

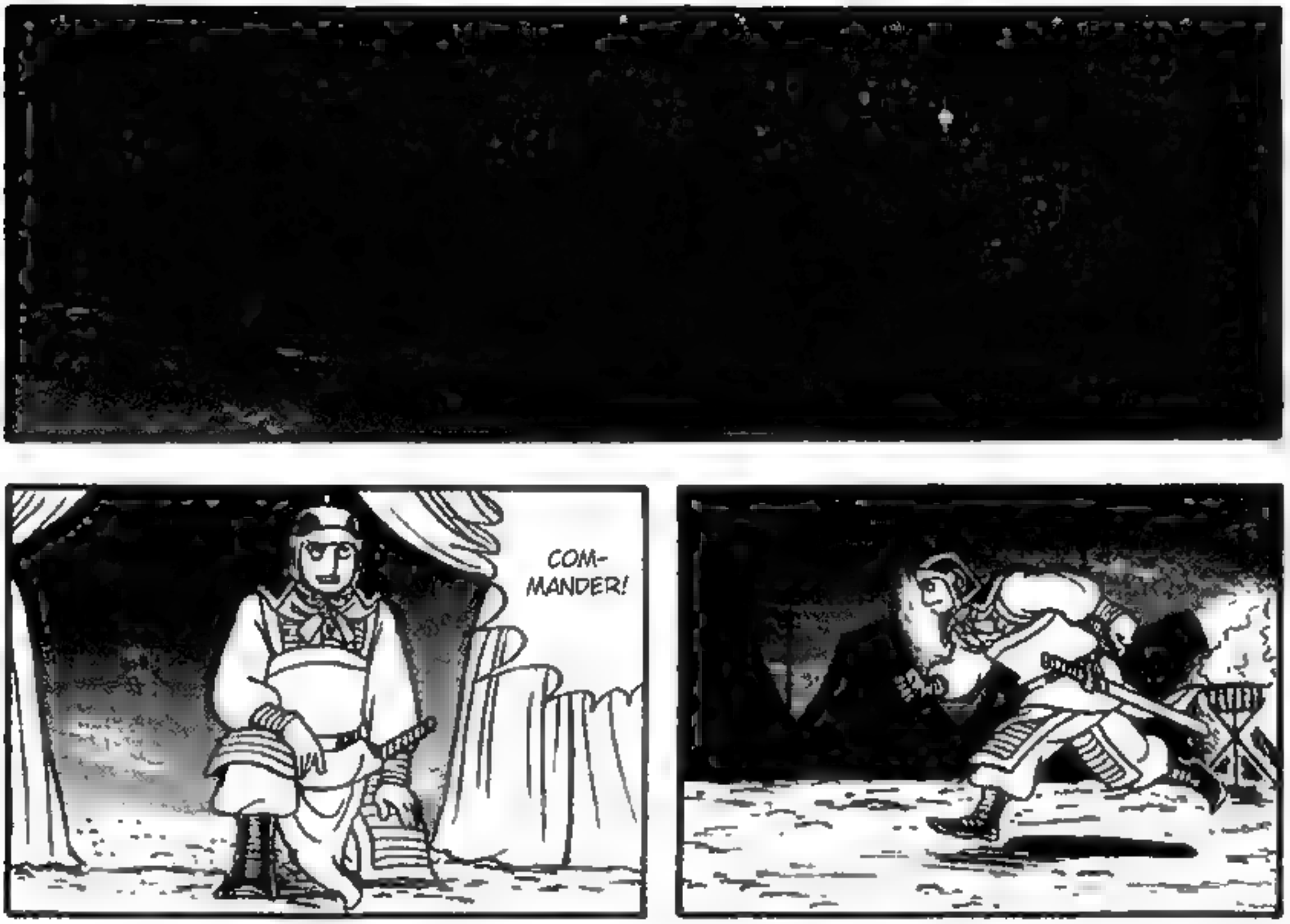
ENOUGH! YOU ARE DISMISSED!

.....

MY APOLOGIES, XU SHENG.

.....

I'M SURE THERE'LL BE NO GREAT LOSS EVEN WITHOUT HIS SERVICE. I DO NOT THINK I WILL EMPLOY HIM AGAIN.

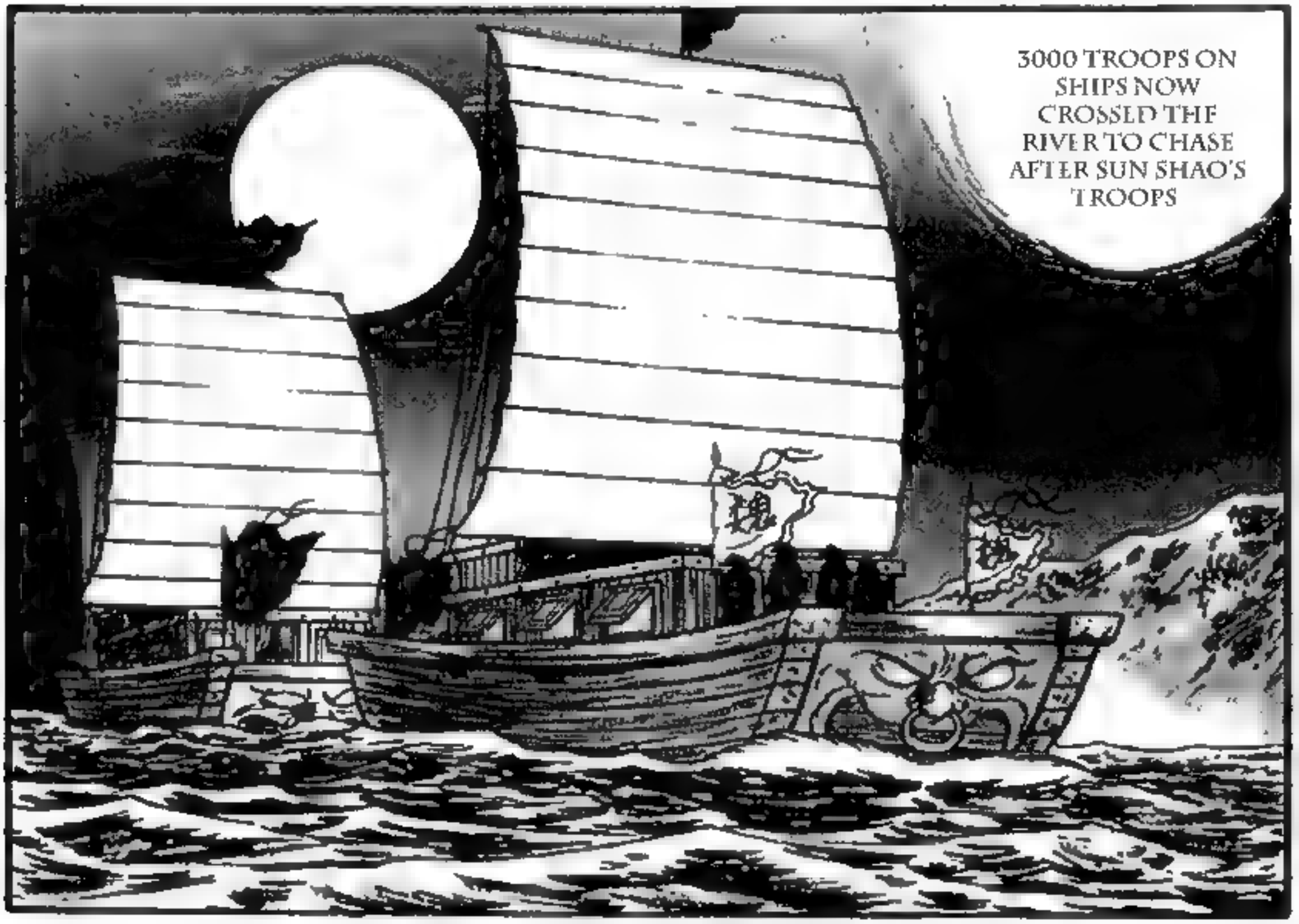

COM-
MANDER!
WHAT!?
SUN SHAO HAS LED 3000 TROOPS TO CROSS THE RIVER TO GUANGLING!

BUT IF I ALLOW SUN SHAO TO BE CAPTURED OR KILLED, I WOULD GREATLY SHAME HIS HIGHNESS AFTER HE LOWERED HIS HEAD JUST TO PREVENT SUN SHAO'S EXECUTION. .

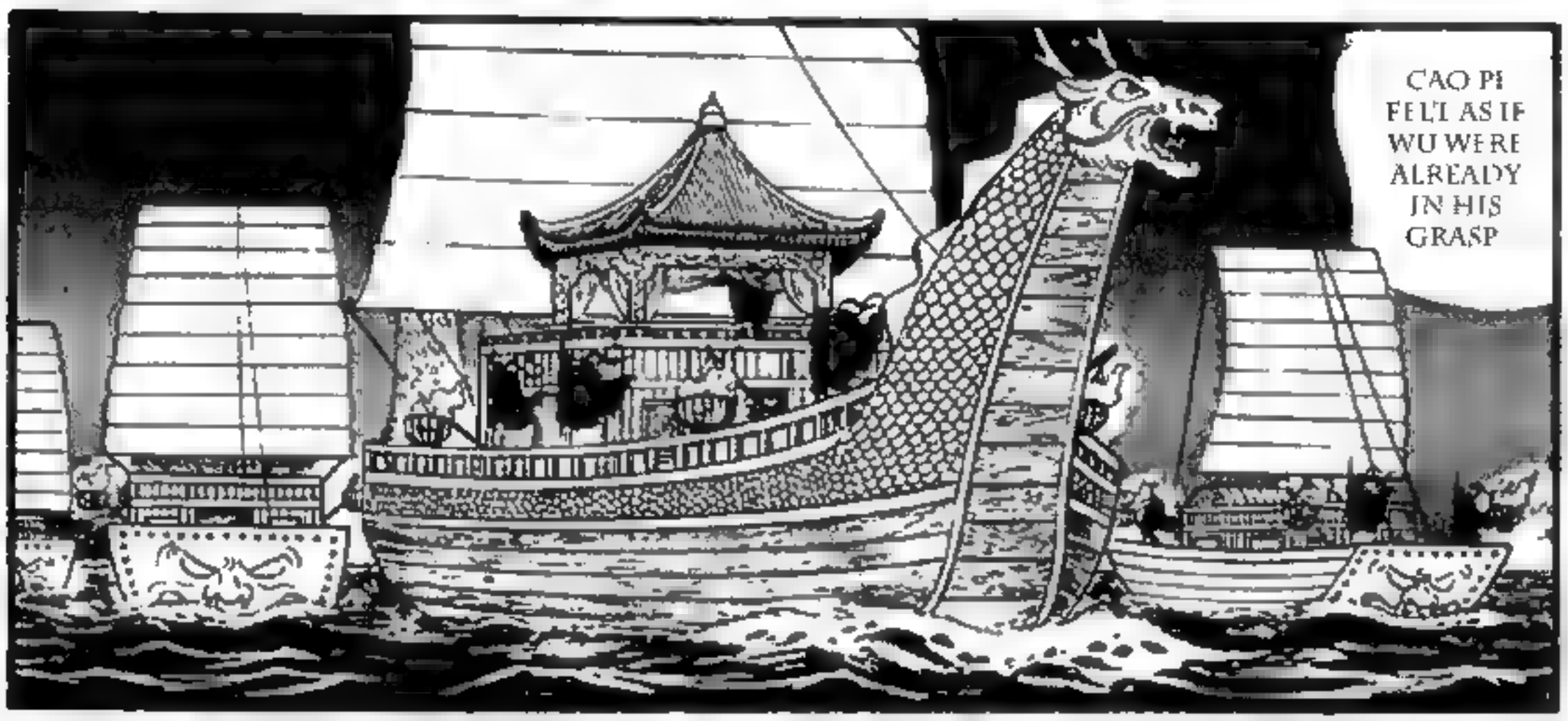
THAT SELFISH IDIOT NEVER LISTENS, DOES HE!?

YES, SIR.
TAKE 3000 TROOPS ACROSS THE RIVER TO REINFORCE SUN SHAO'S FORCES!

YES?
DING FENG.


3000 TROOPS ON SHIPS NOW CROSSED THE RIVER TO CHASE AFTER SUN SHAO'S TROOPS

FIRE AND WIND



PERHAPS THE ENEMIES HAVE FLED. WE SHOULD CROSS THE RIVER AT ONCE.

YES...

I CANNOT SEE ANY LIGHT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER.

YES, THERE IS NO NEED TO RUSH.

NO, IT IS TOO PRESUMPTUOUS TO THINK THAT. I ADVISE WE WAIT A FEW DAYS TO SEE WHETHER THIS IS A RUSE OR THE ENEMIES REALLY HAVE MADE NO PREPARATIONS TO PREVENT US FROM CROSSING THE RIVER.

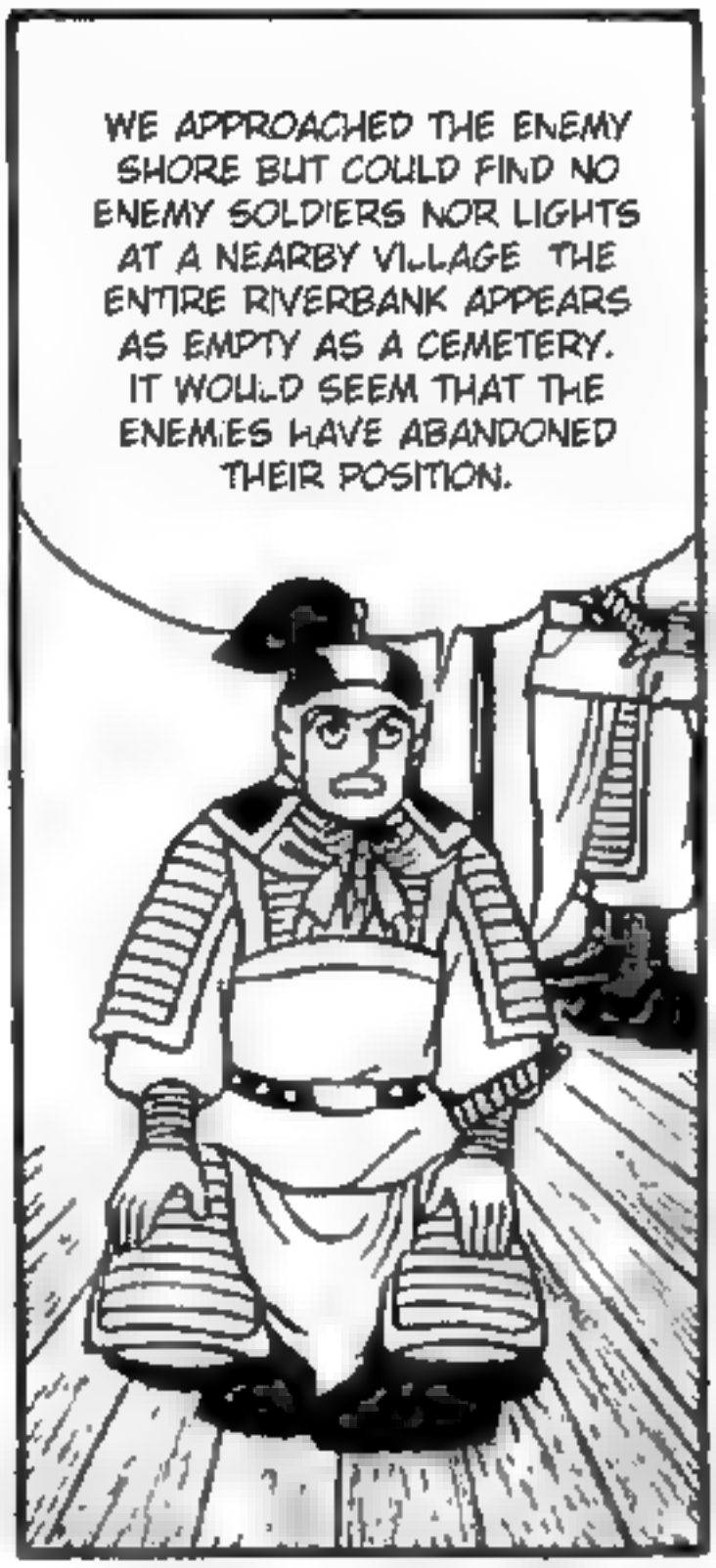
AH, EXCELLENT.

YOUR MAJESTY, OUR SCOUTS HAVE RETURNED.

YES, SPEAK.

I BRING A REPORT, YOUR MAJESTY.

HAHAHA! WELL, IT'S NOT SURPRISING THEY WOULD FEAR MY 300,000-STRONG ARMY.


WE APPROACHED THE ENEMY SHORE BUT COULD FIND NO ENEMY SOLDIERS NOR LIGHTS AT A NEARBY VILLAGE. THE ENTIRE RIVERBANK APPEARS AS EMPTY AS A CEMETERY. IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE ENEMIES HAVE ABANDONED THEIR POSITION.

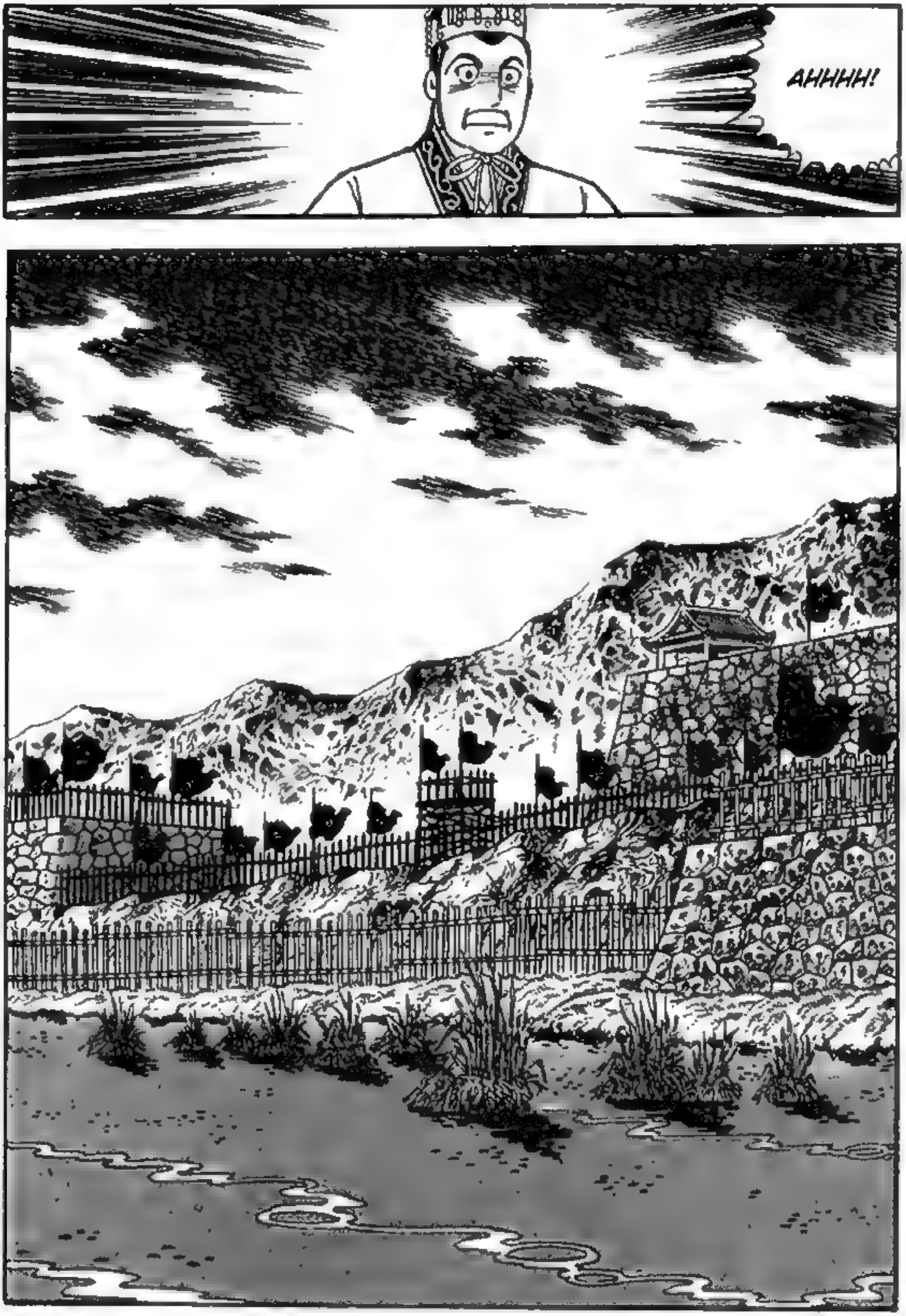
YES, SIR.
PREPARE TO TRANSPORT OUR ARMY ACROSS THE RIVER AS SOON AS THE SUN IS OUT TOMORROW.

HM?

YOUR MAJESTY! YOU MUST COME SEE THIS!

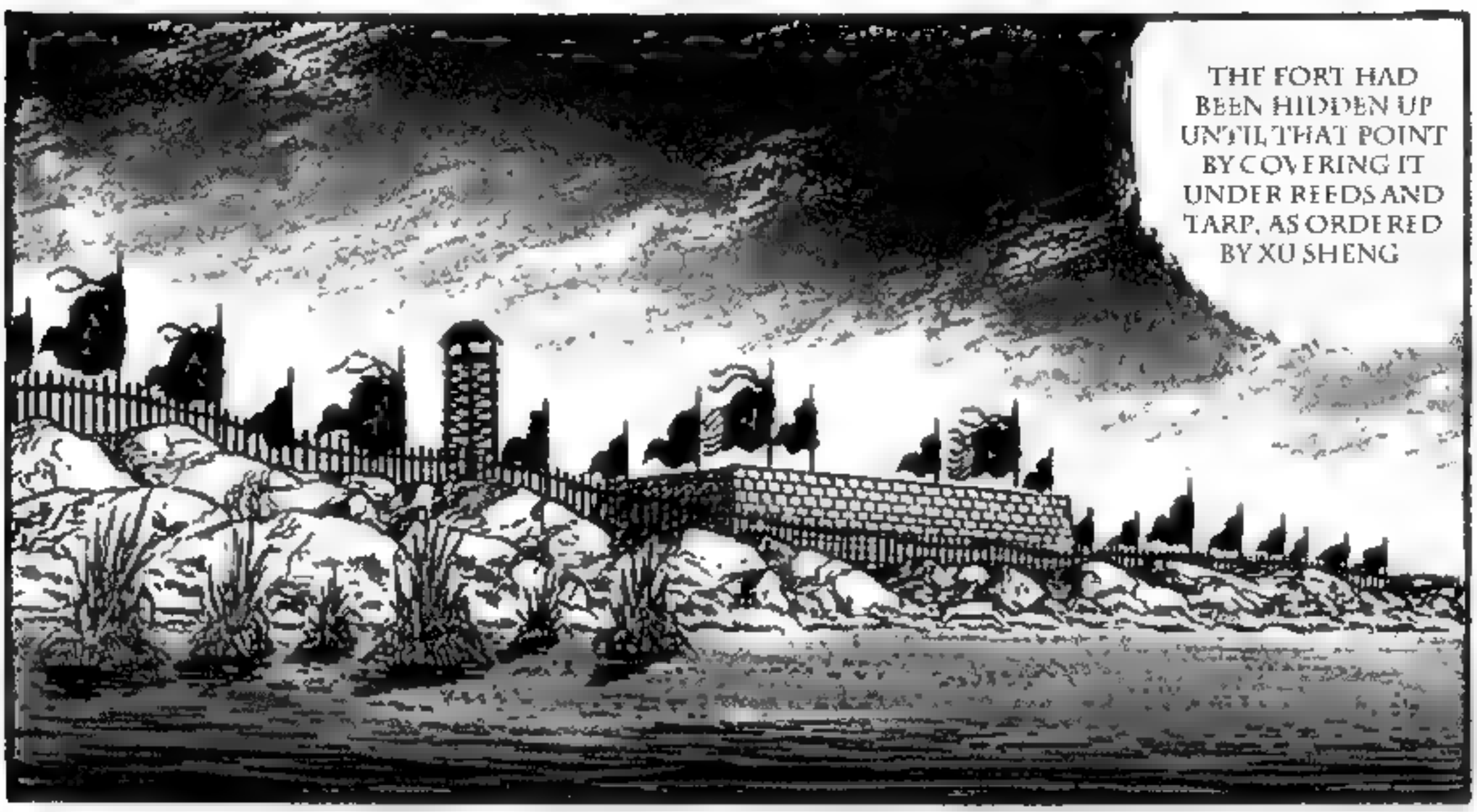
WHAT'S GOING ON?

PLEASE CONFIRM THE SIGHT WITH YOUR OWN EYES AS WELL.


AHHHH!

THE ENEMIES CLEARLY SEEM QUITE PREPARED TO CONTEST OUR RIVER CROSSING.

DID THEY BUILD THIS IN A SINGLE NIGHT OR...?


THE FORT HAD BEEN HIDDEN UP UNTIL THAT POINT BY COVERING IT UNDER REEDS AND TARP, AS ORDERED BY XU SHENG

吳
NOW THAT THE WEI FLEET HAD ARRIVED, THE CAMOUFLAGE HAD BEEN PULLED OFF TO ELICIT FEAR AND SURPRISE IN THE WEI ARMY

AND MANY OF THE SOLDIERS WERE MERELY SCARECROWS DRESSED IN ARMOUR AND HOLDING UP ARMS AND FLAGS.

BUT THE FORT WAS AN ELABORATE RUSE FOR ITS WALLS WERE MADE OUT OF PAPER.

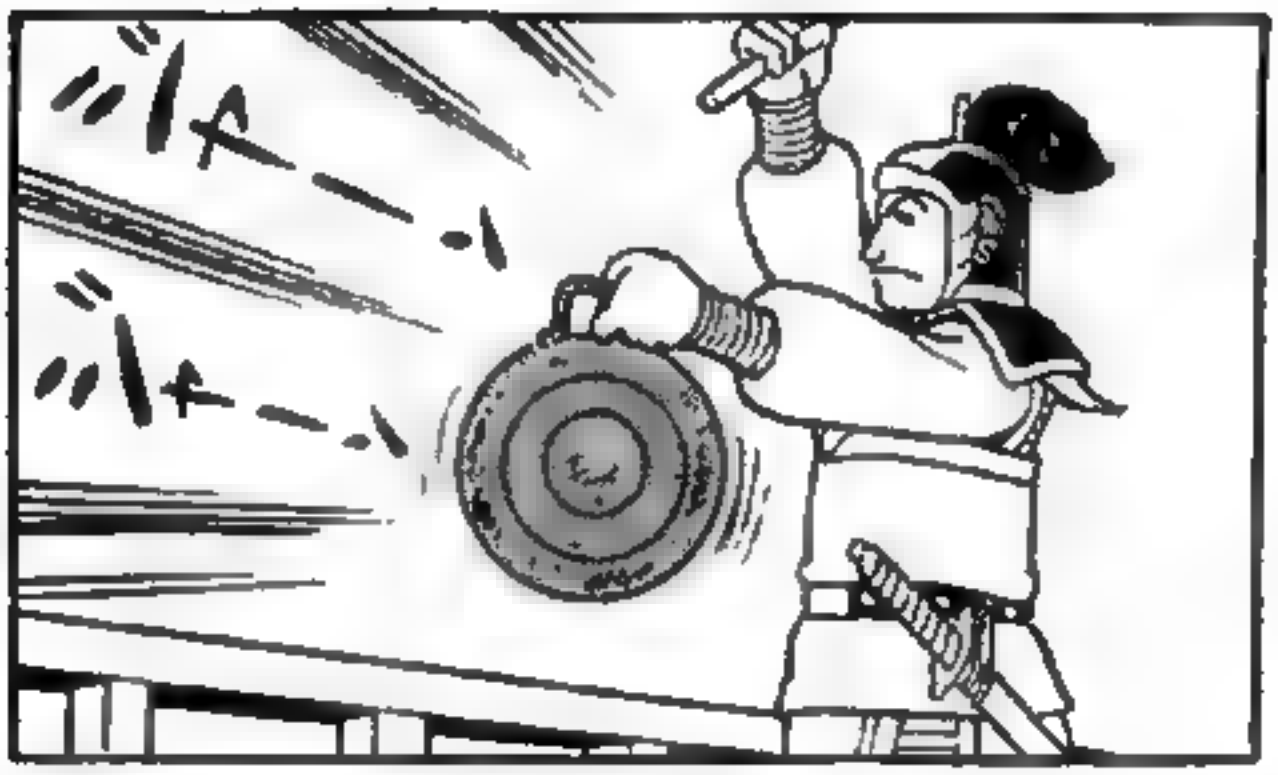
IF THE ENEMIES HAVE MASSED THEIR DEFENSE HERE, IT WOULD BE BETTER TO RELOCATE TO THE HUAI RIVER FOR NOW.

HM...

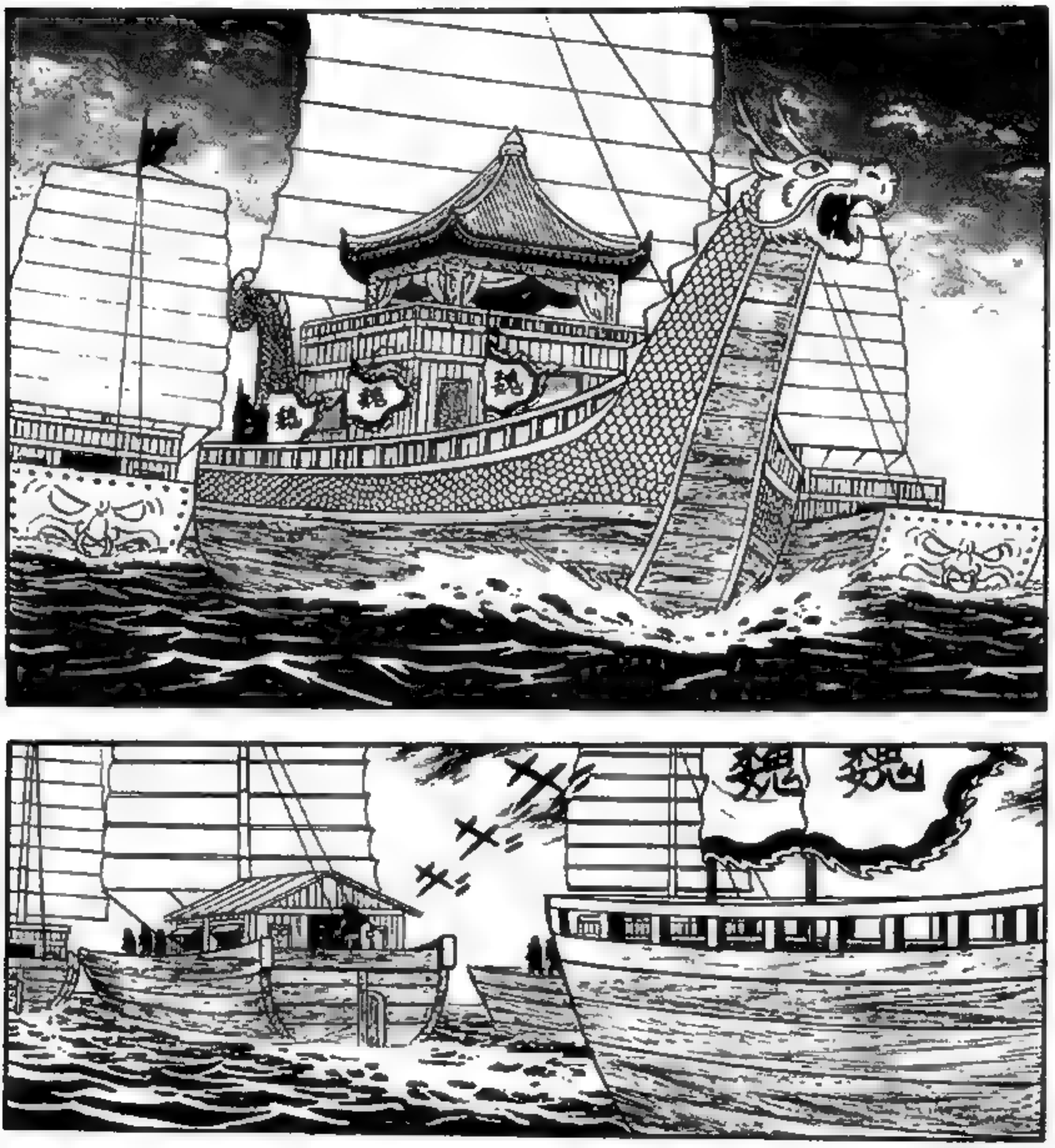
YOUR HIGHNESS, I SUSPECT THE ENEMIES HAVE MANY OTHER SCHEMES IN STORE FOR US...

YES, SIR.

SEND OUT THE ORDER TO WITHDRAW TO THE HUAI RIVER!

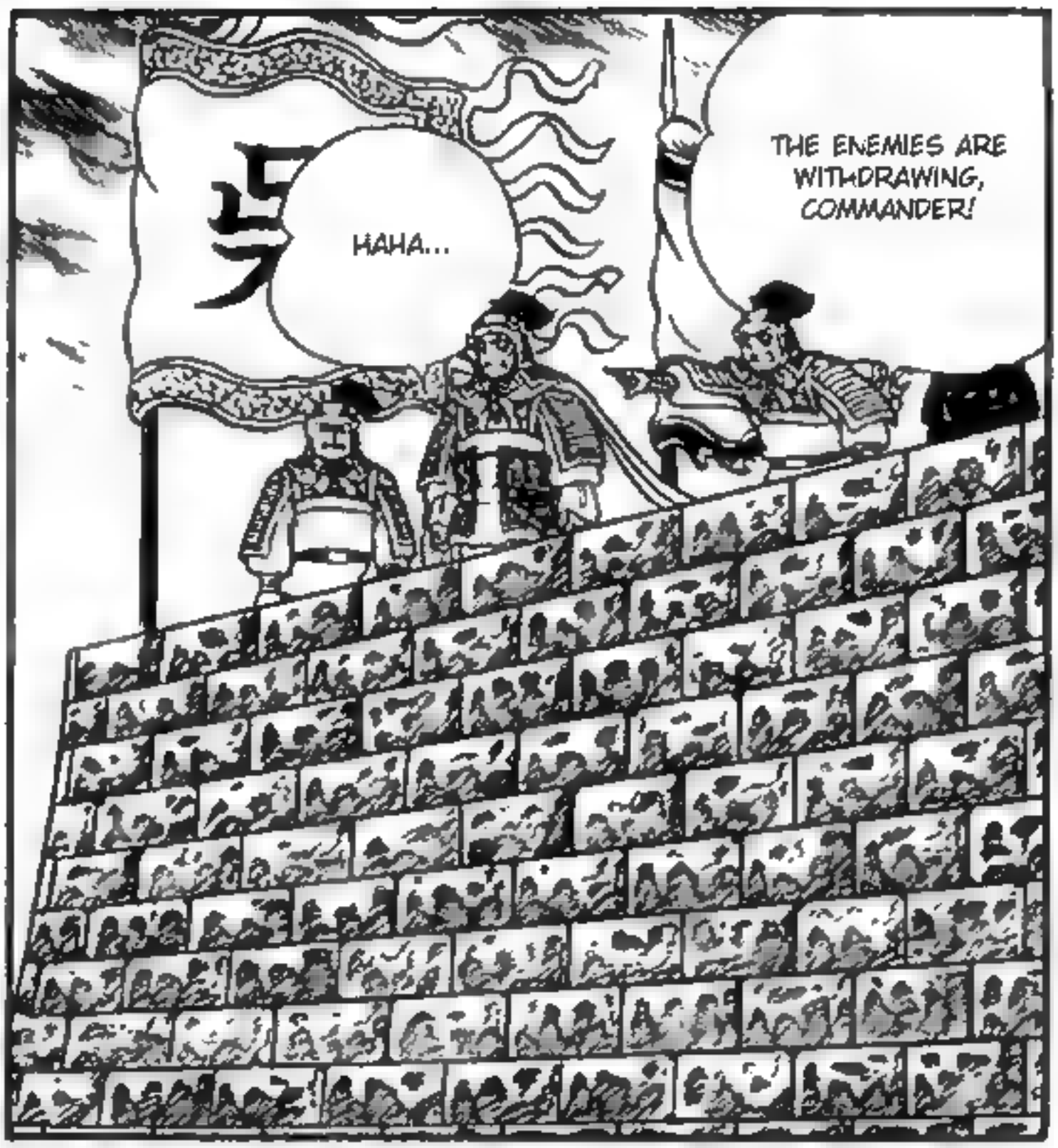


WITHDRAW BACK TO HLAI RIVER!



WE MUST HAVE GIVEN THEM A GOOD SCARE.

HM?


HAHA...
THE ENEMIES ARE WITHDRAWING, COMMANDER!

AH!

HM?

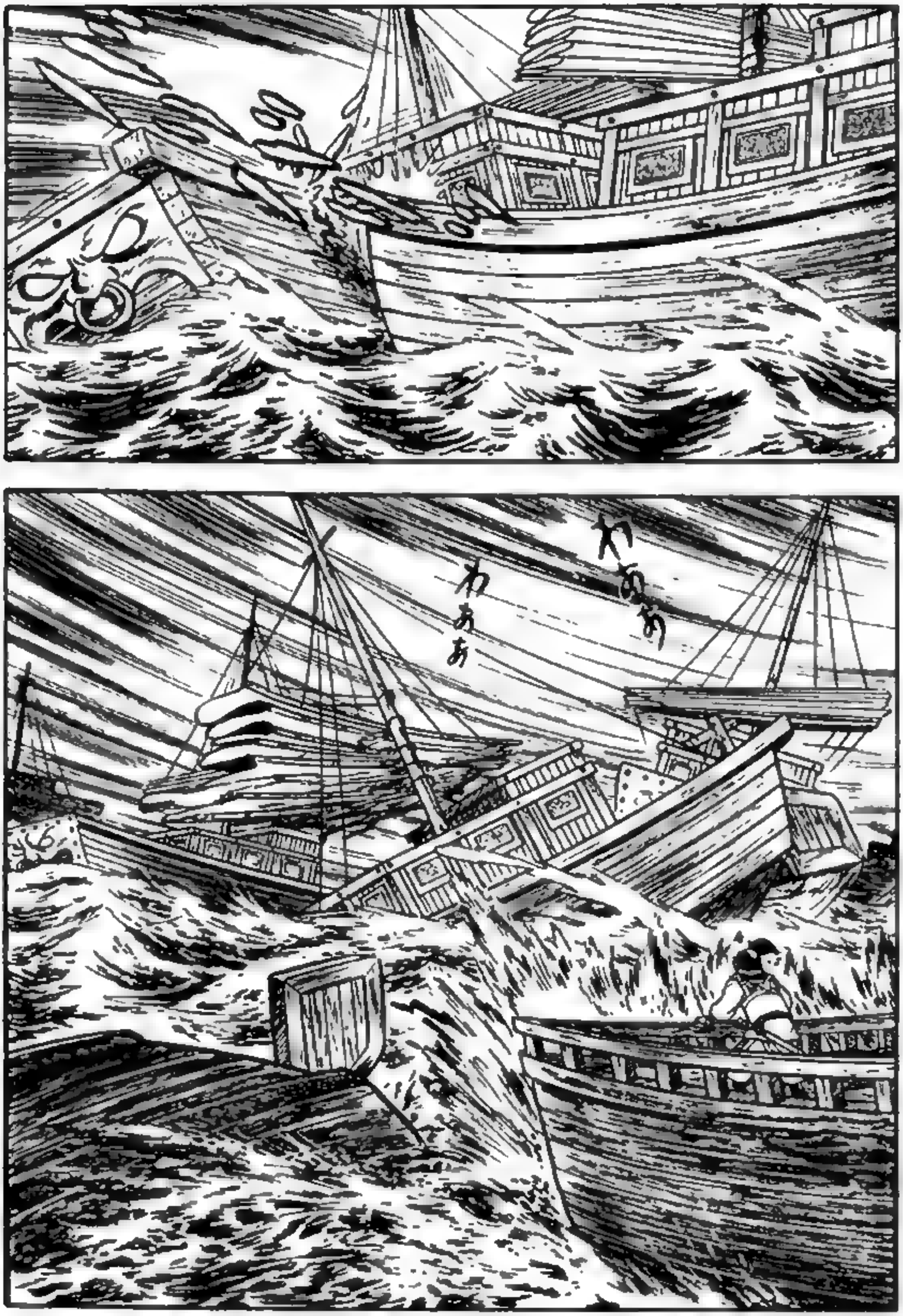
STRANGE CLOUDS ARE COMING THIS WAY, YOUR MAJESTY.

OH NO!
DOCK BY
THE SHORE
AT ONCE!

WE'VE LOST CONTROL OF THE RUDDER! BRACE FOR A POSSIBLE CRASH!
ど～ろろろ……

AGHHH!

NGHH!



YOUR MAJESTY!

AGHH!

ARE WE STILL FAR FROM THE DOCK?

WHEEZE...

PLEASE ENDURE THE STORM JUST A LITTLE LONGER.

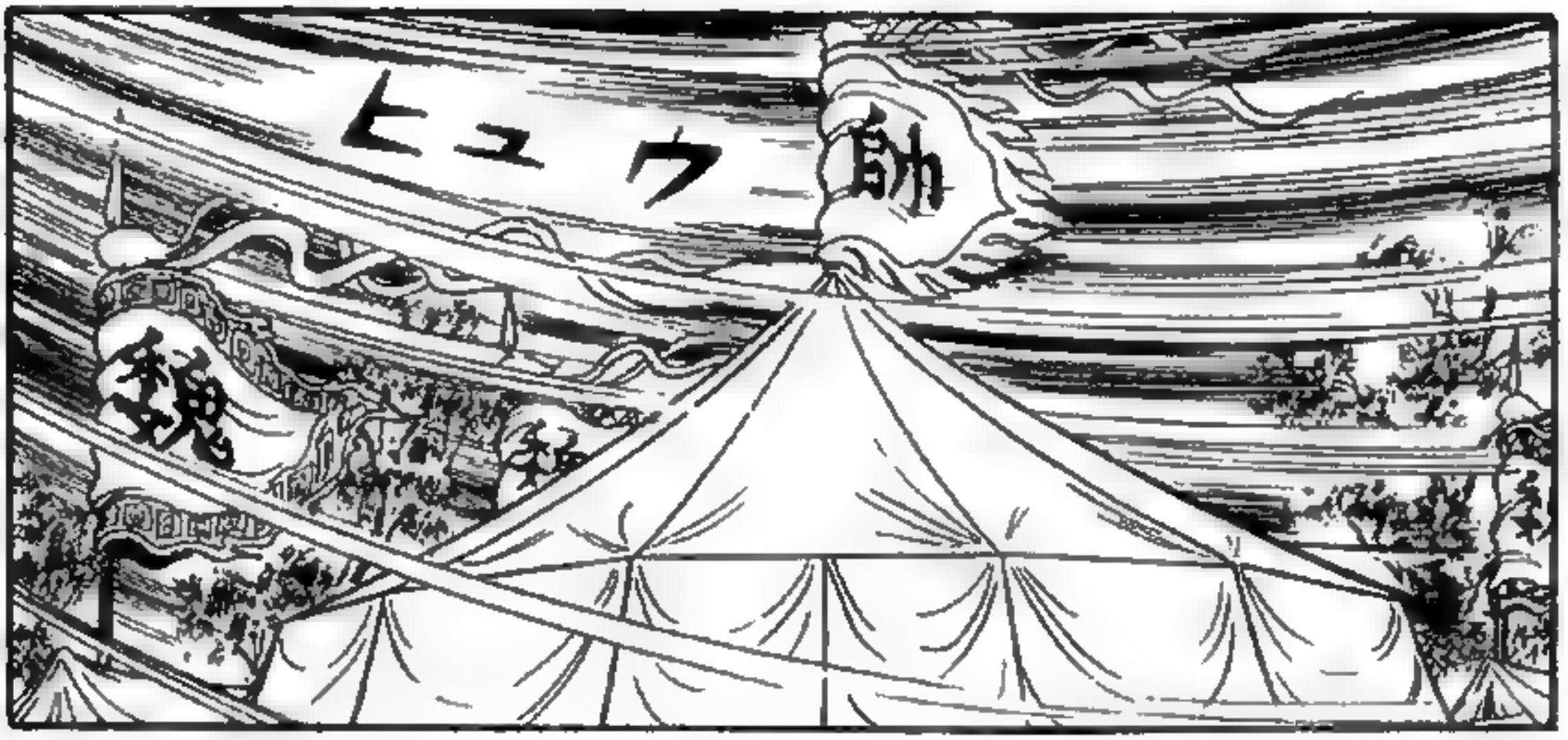
URGHH!

HELP ME UP, WILL YOU...

MNN...

WE HAVE DOCKED AT SHORE, YOUR HIGHNESS.

OUR SHIPS TOOK A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF DAMAGE...
TALK ABOUT A FREAK STORM.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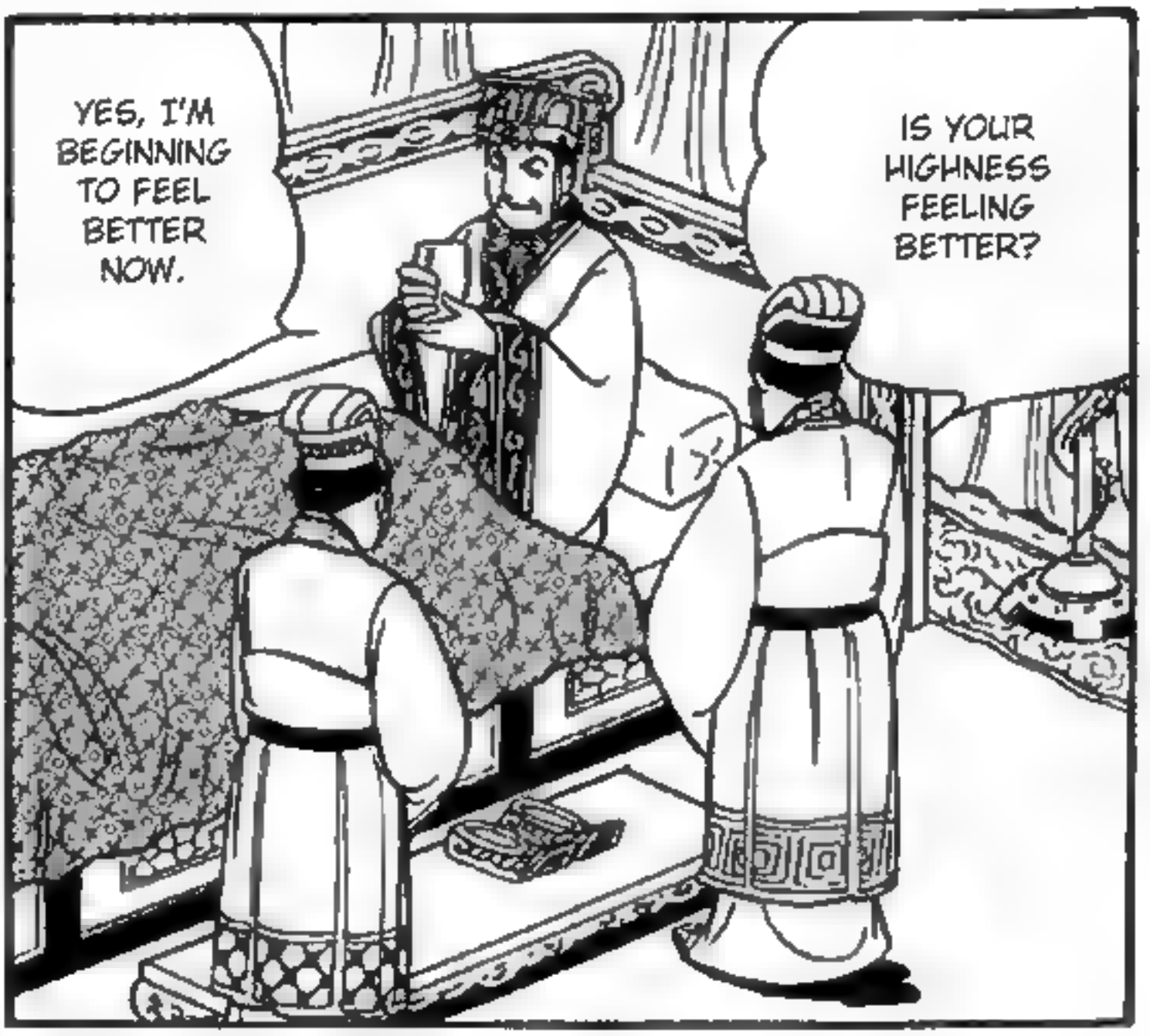
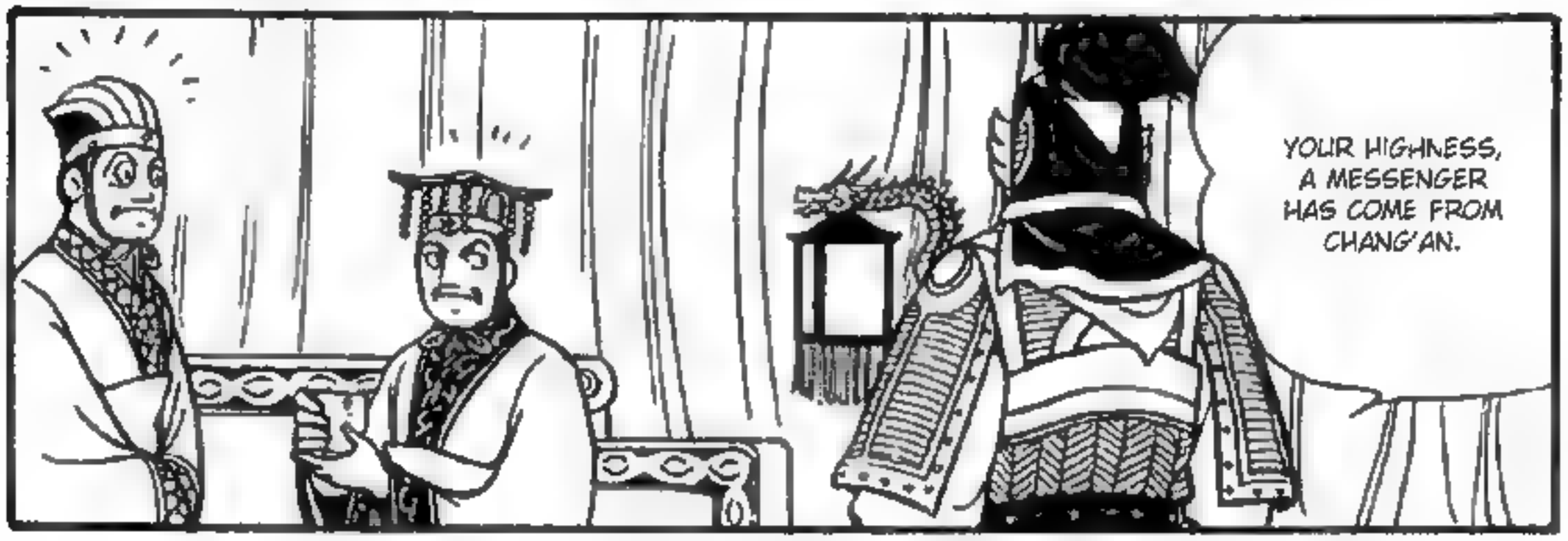
THEY WILL LIKELY LAST FOR THE REMAINDER OF TODAY AT LEAST.
BUT HOW LONG WILL THESE STRONG WINDS CONTINUE?


YES, I'M BEGINNING TO FEEL BETTER NOW.
IS YOUR HIGHNESS FEELING BETTER?


YOUR HIGHNESS, A MESSENGER HAS COME FROM CHANG'AN.

THIS WAY.

LET HIM IN.

YES, SIR.

WHAT!?

YOUR MAJESTY, I URGENTLY REPORT THAT THE SHU GENERAL ZHAO ZILONG HAS MARCHED OUT FROM YANGPING PASS TO ATTACK CHANG'AN.

KONGMING MUST HAVE JUDGED THAT WE WERE TOO DISTRACTED WITH WU RIGHT NOW AND ORDERED THE ATTACK.

IF WE LOSE CHANG'AN, THEN OUR ENTIRE WESTERN FRONT IS COMPROM-ISED!

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.
TELL THE TROOPS TO RETREAT AS SOON AS THESE WINDS STOP!

HOWEVER, JUST THEN

TE-TE-TE-

HM?

ARE THOSE OUR TROOPS OR ENEMIES?

GAAAAHHHH!

IT'S A RAID!

AGHH!

EVERY
WHERE

THEY
WERE THE
TROOPS
LED BY
SUN
SHAO

THEY
TOSSED
BURNING
TORCHES

AND WITH HELP
FROM THE WINDS
THE FIRE SOON
ENGULFED THE
WHOLE CAMPS.

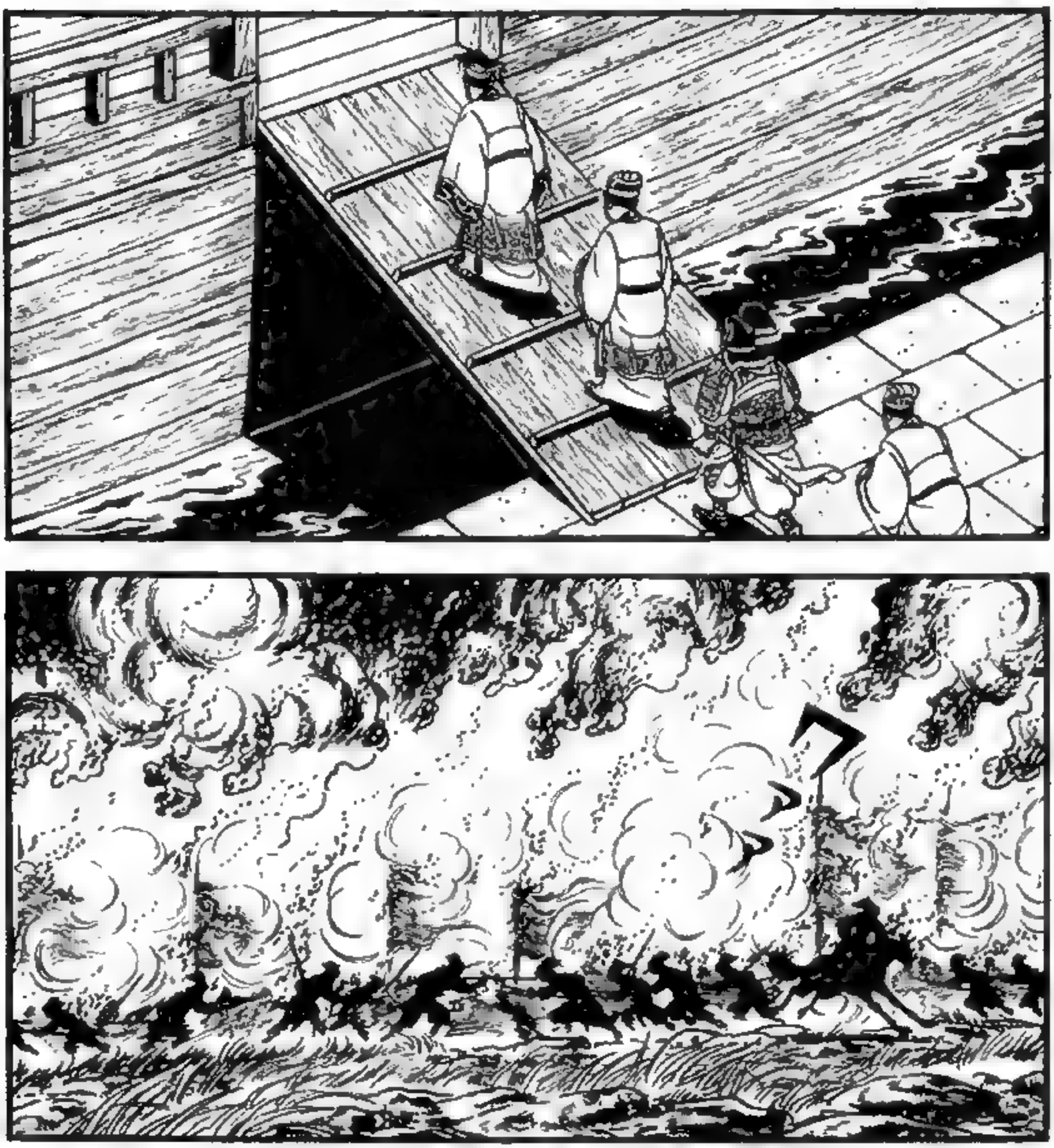
Y-YES.

IT IS TOO DANGEROUS HERE FOR YOUR MAJESTY! PLEASE RETREAT FIRST ON THE SHIP!

AHH!

RIGHT.
PLEASE, COME THIS WAY TO THE SHIP.

WE DO NOT KNOW AT PRESENT.
JUST HOW MANY ENEMIES ARE ATTACKING US?

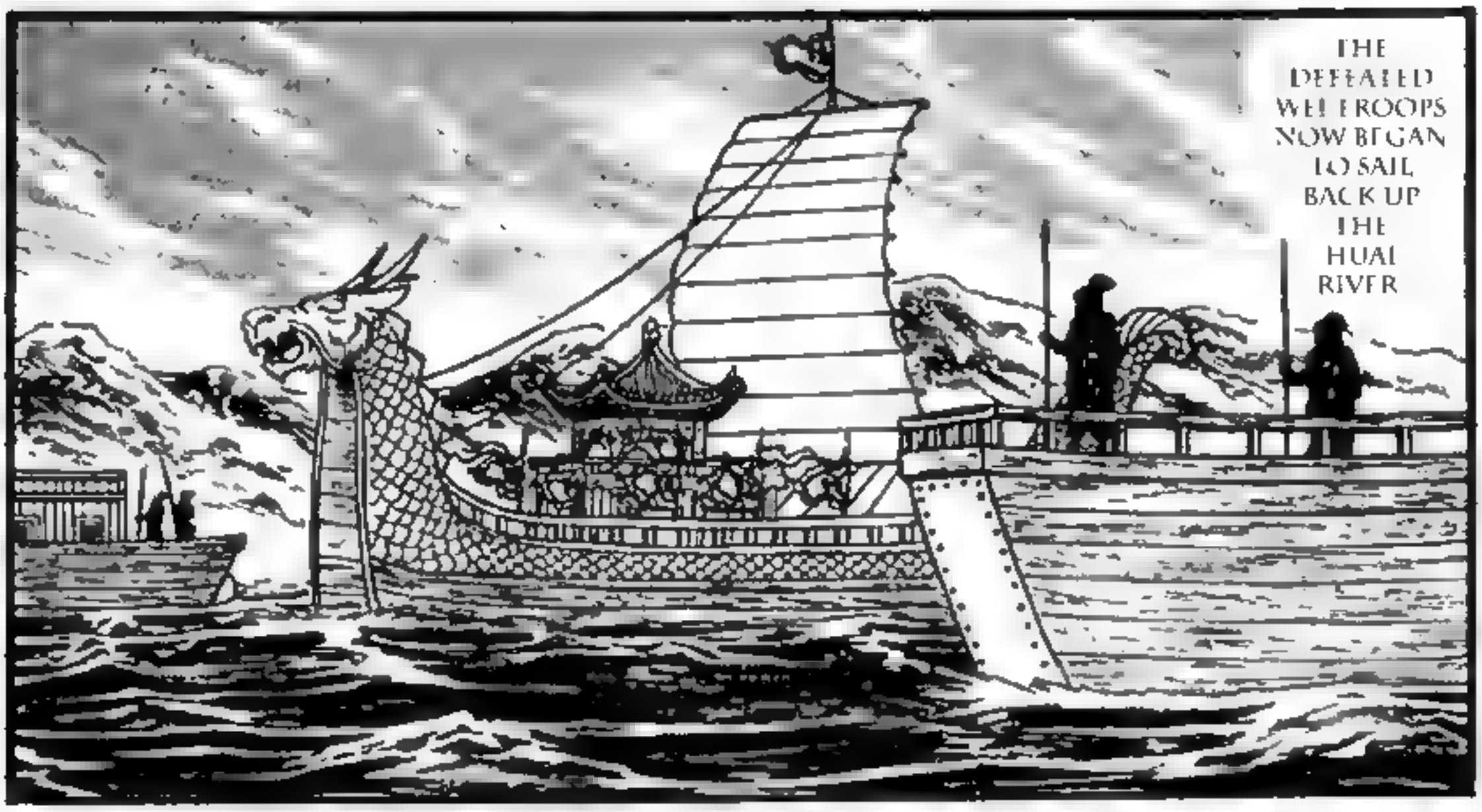


IT IS TOO LATE FOR REGRETS.

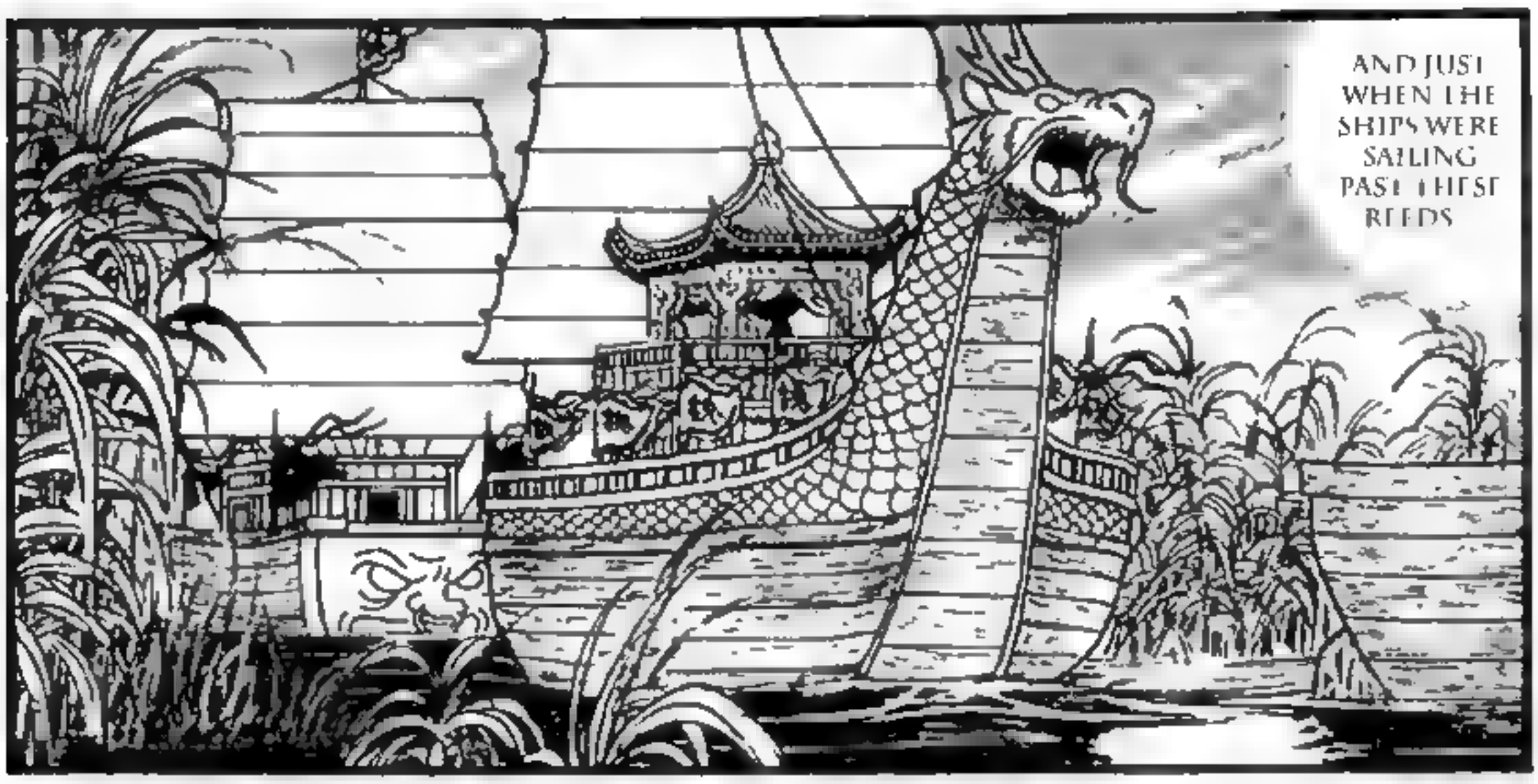
I NEVER EXPECTED THE ENEMIES WOULD BE SO BOLD AS TO ATTACK US ACROSS THE RIVER...

WHAT A DISASTER...

LET US RETREAT BACK NORTH!


THE
DEFEATED
WEI TROOPS
NOW BEGAN
TO SAIL
BACK UP
THE
HUAI
RIVER

THE WATERS
HERE WERE
THICK WITH
REEDS


AND JUST
WHEN THE
SHIPS WERE
SAILING
PAST THESE
REEDS

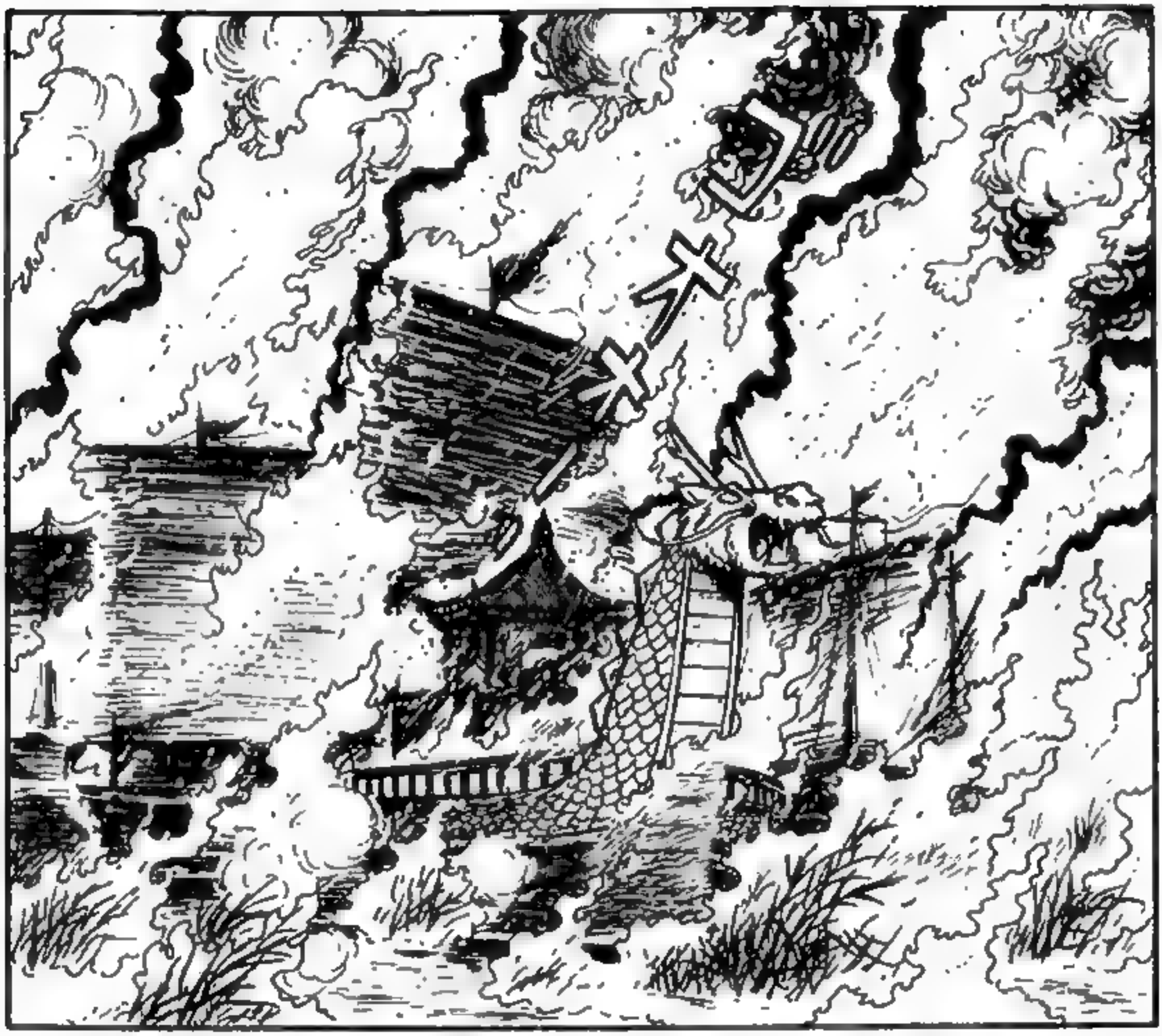
THE REEDS SUDDENLY BURST INTO FLAMES
LITTLE DID CAO PI REALIZE THAT THE WU TROOPS HAD POURED FISH OIL OVER THESE REEDS IN ADVANCE AND WERE WAITING FOR THE SHIPS TO PASS TO LIGHT THEM ON FIRE

HELP!
AHHH!

THE SHIPS ARE ALL ON FIRE!

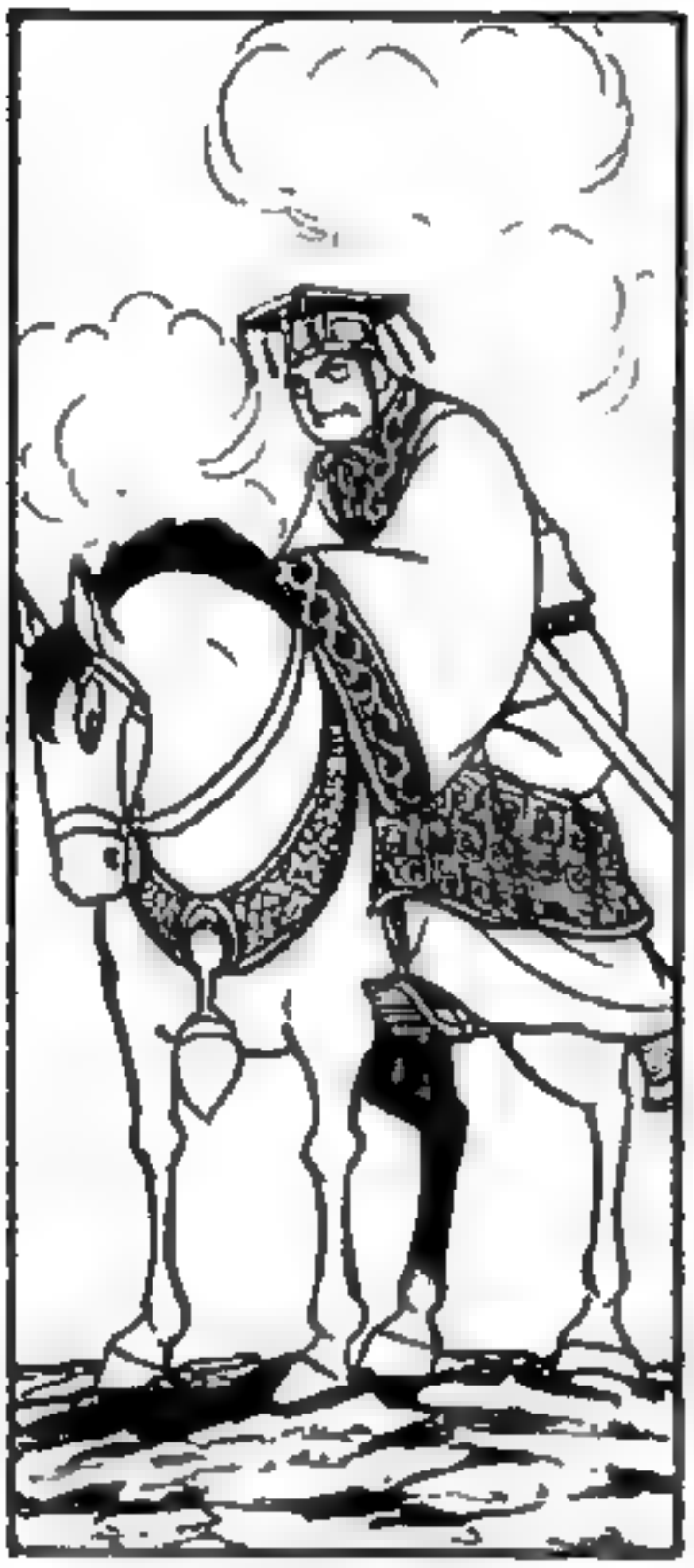
Y-YES...
YOUR HIGHNESS, OUR FLAGSHIP HAS CAUGHT ON FIRE AS WELL! WE MUST EVACUATE AT ONCE!

AGHHH!

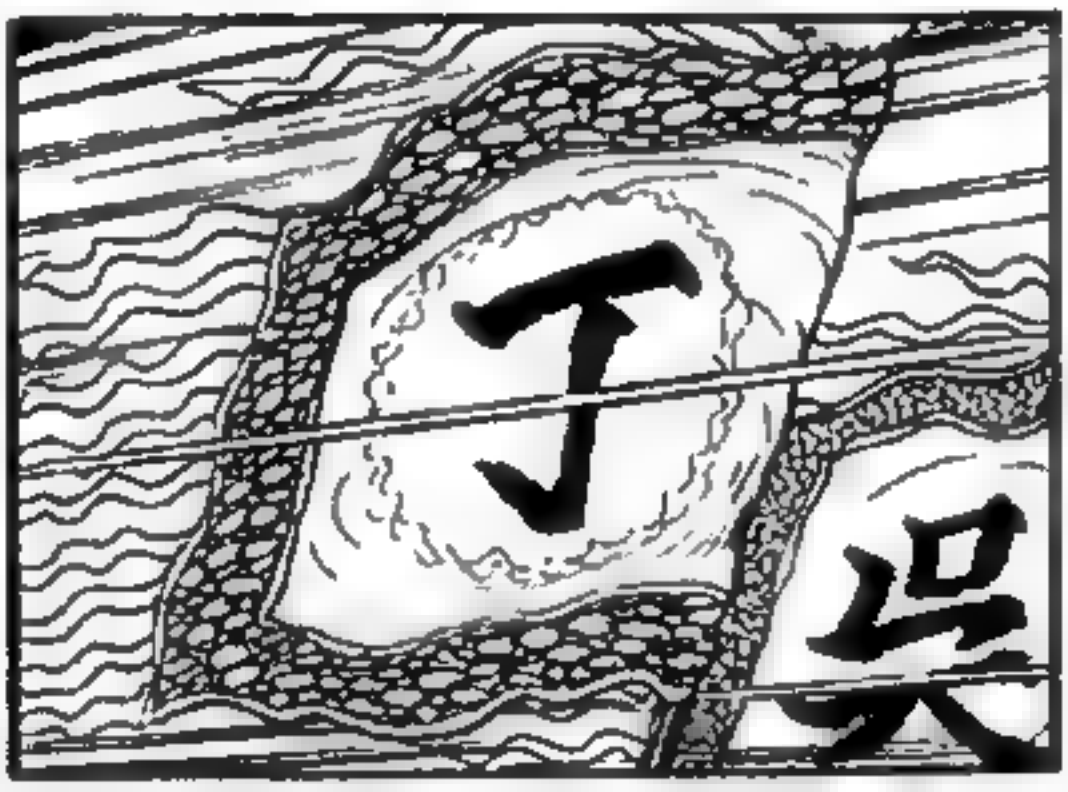


HUFF
HUFF
UGHH...

MY
FLEET



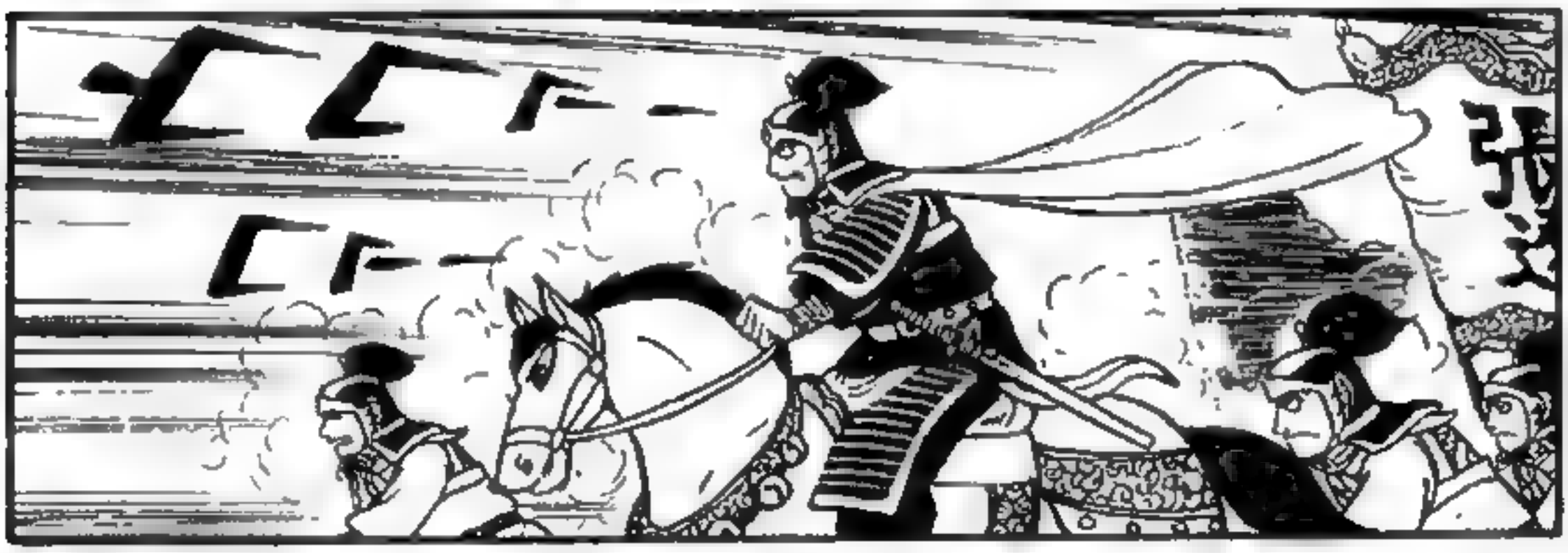
YES.
REORGANIZE OUR SURVIV-ING TROOPS BEFORE MAKING A TACTICAL RETREAT.

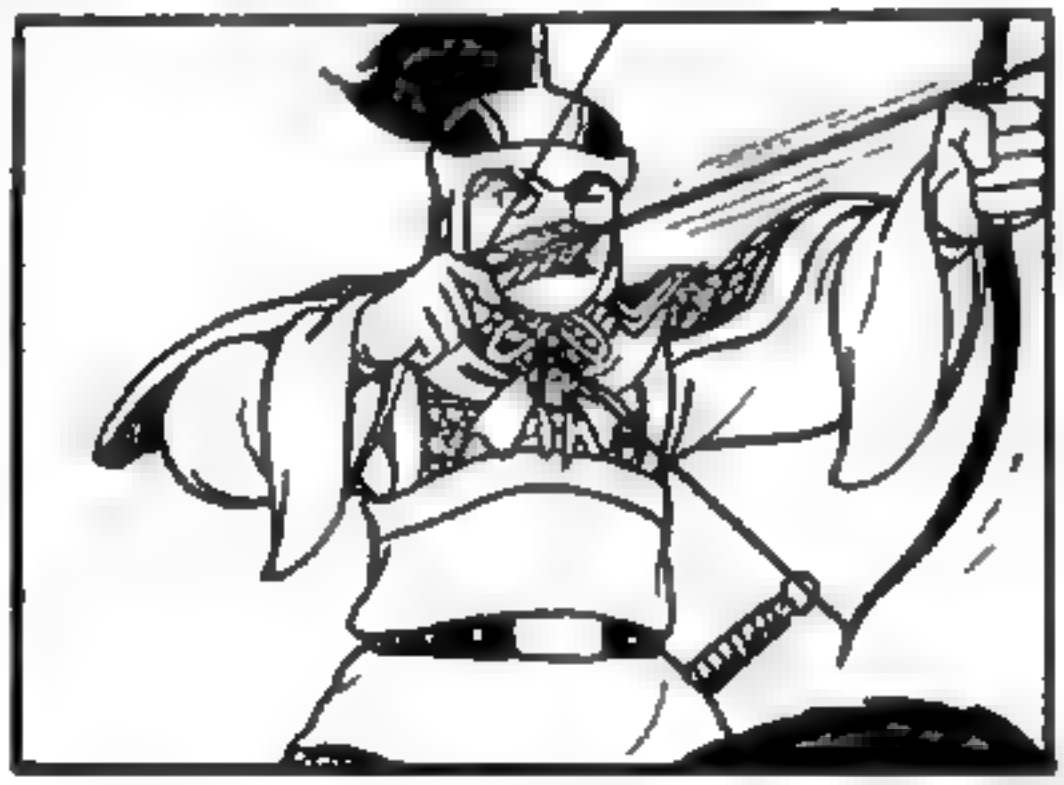


*DING (丁) FOR DING FENG

張奇
WE SHALL PROTECT YOUR MAJESTY WITH OUR LIVES!

MORE ENEMIES!?

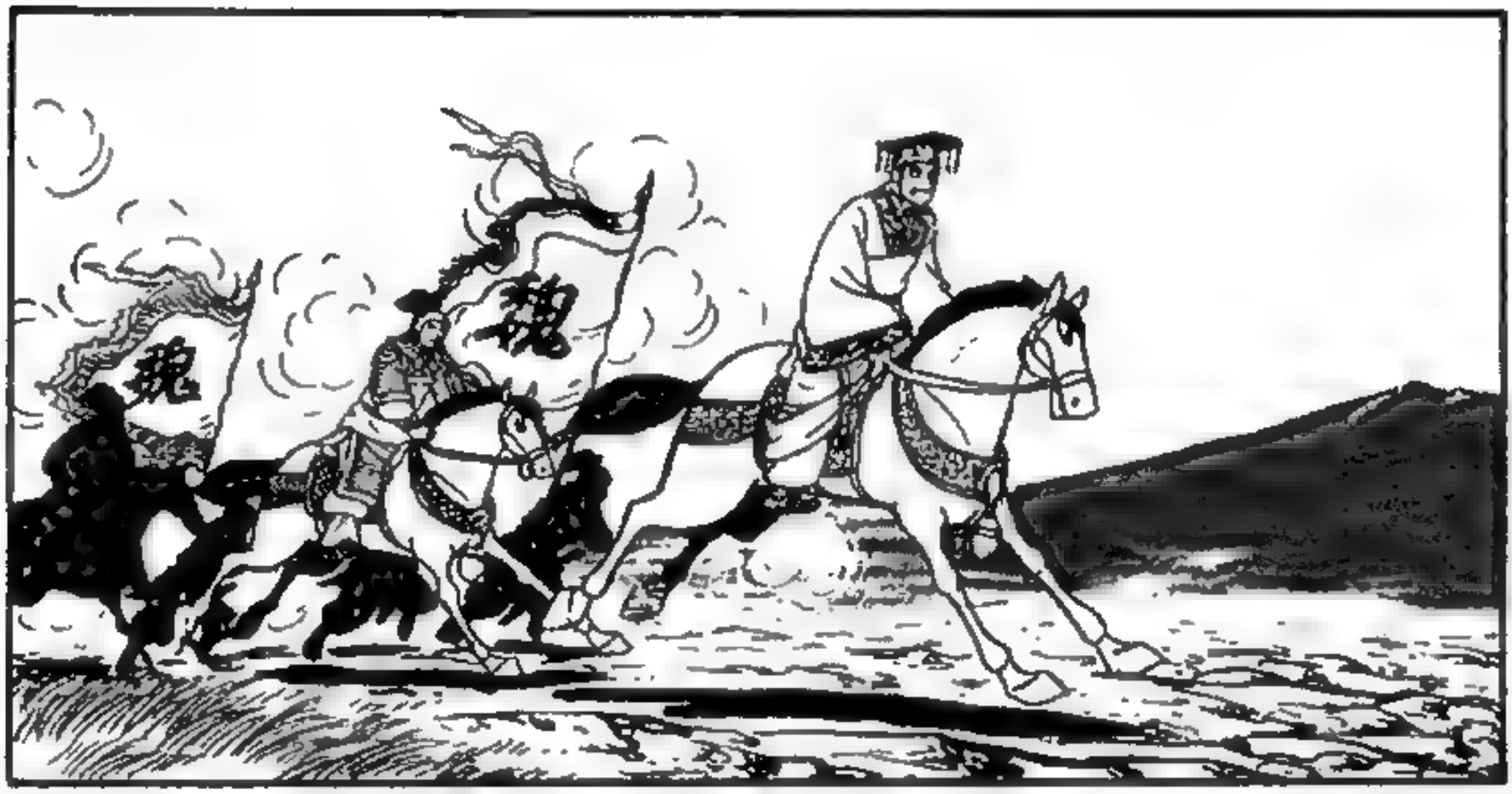




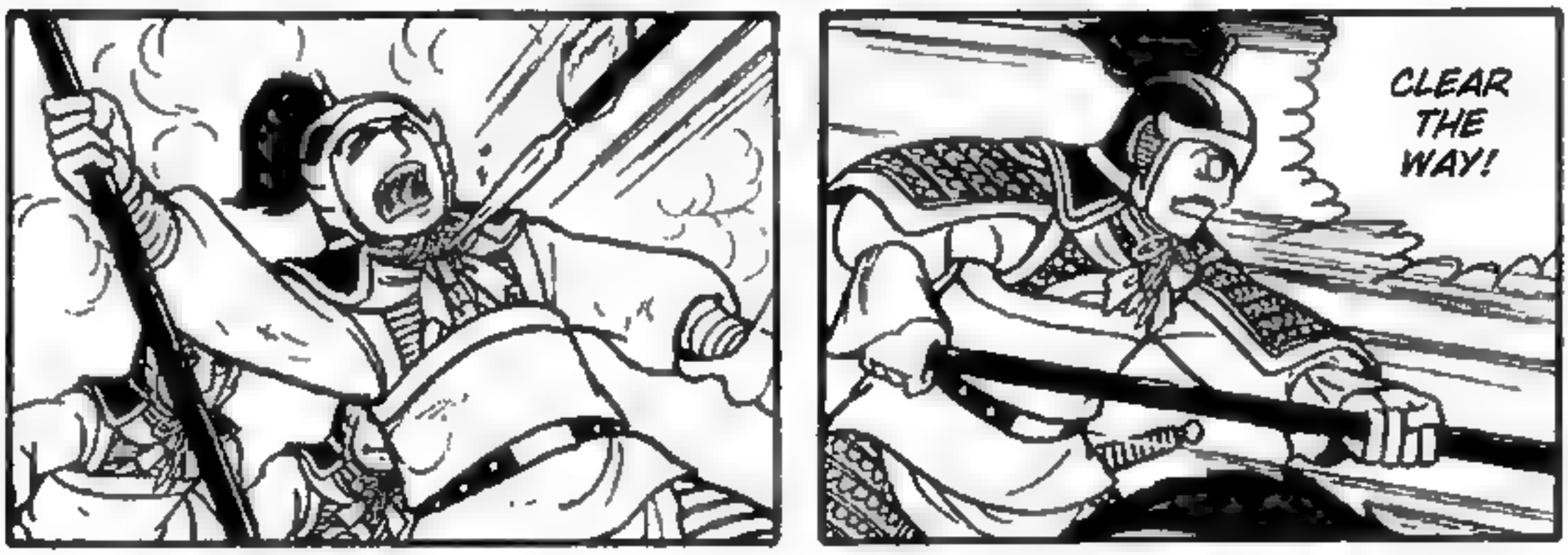
NGH...

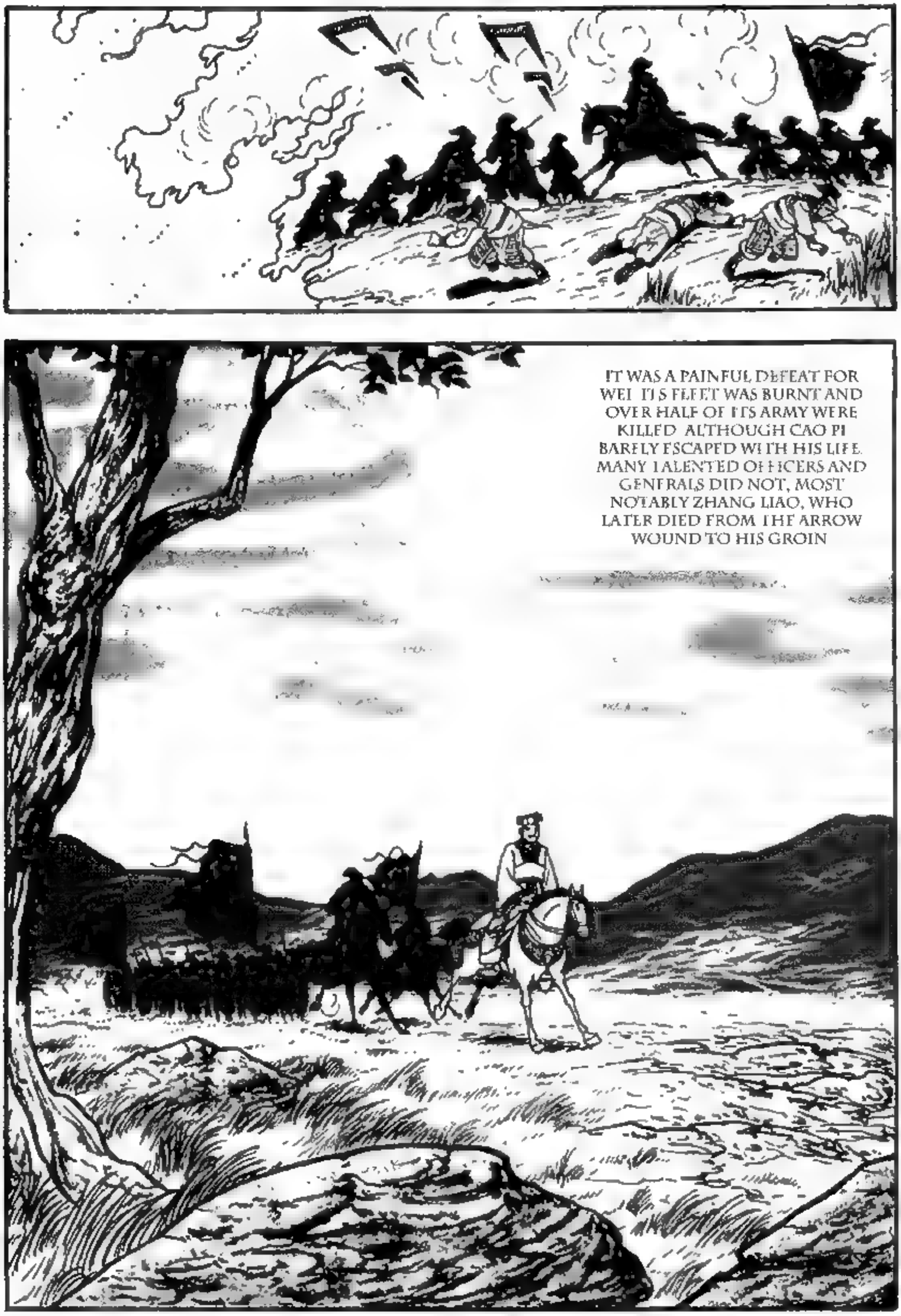
AGH!

I I'M FINE.
ARE YOU ALRIGHT!?
ZHANG LIAO!
魏
魏
RIGHT!
PLEASE RETREAT WHILE WE HOLD THEM OFF, YOUR MAJESTY!
馬


魏
魏

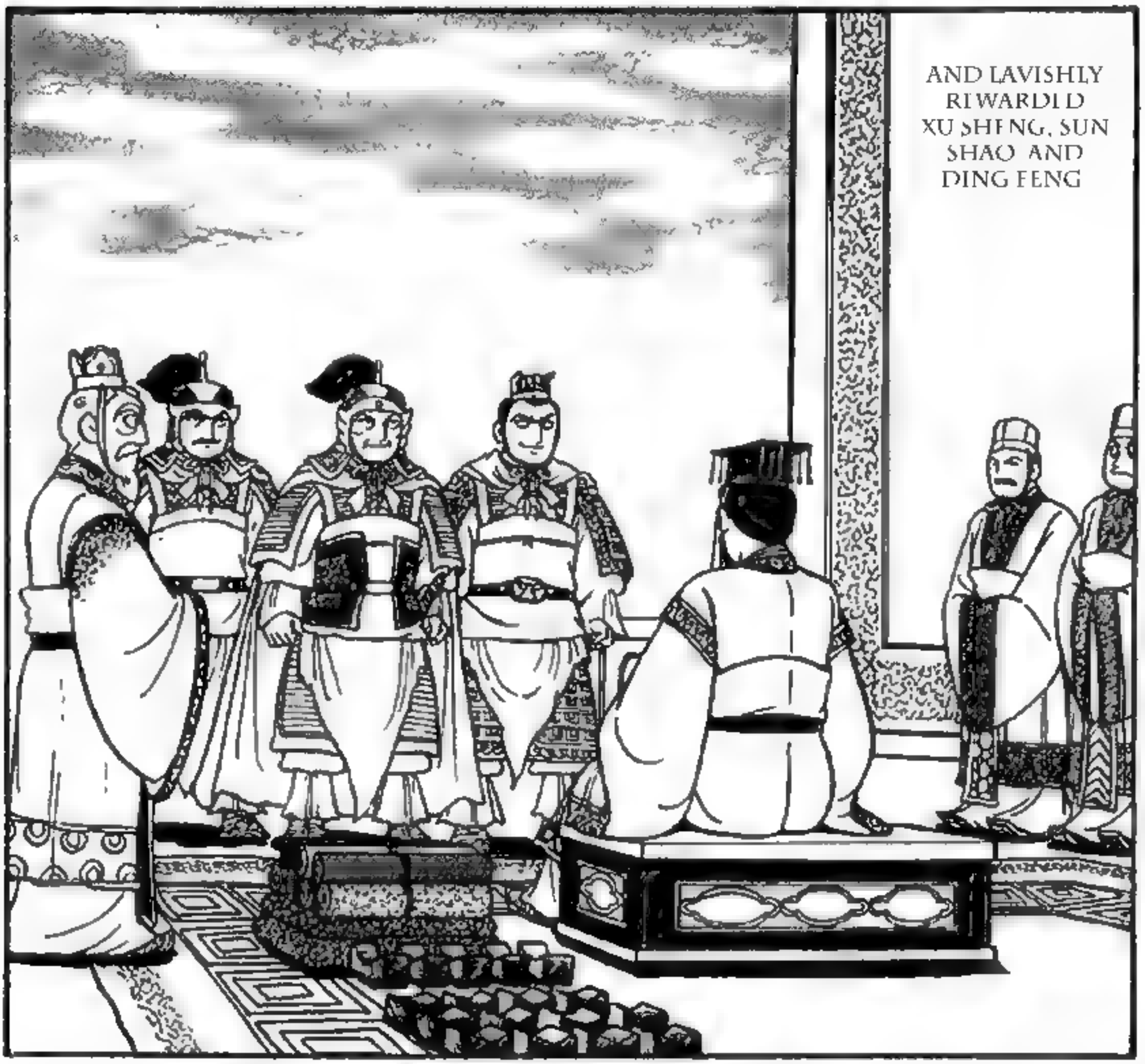
DON'T LET CAO PI ESCAPE!


CLEAR THE WAY!

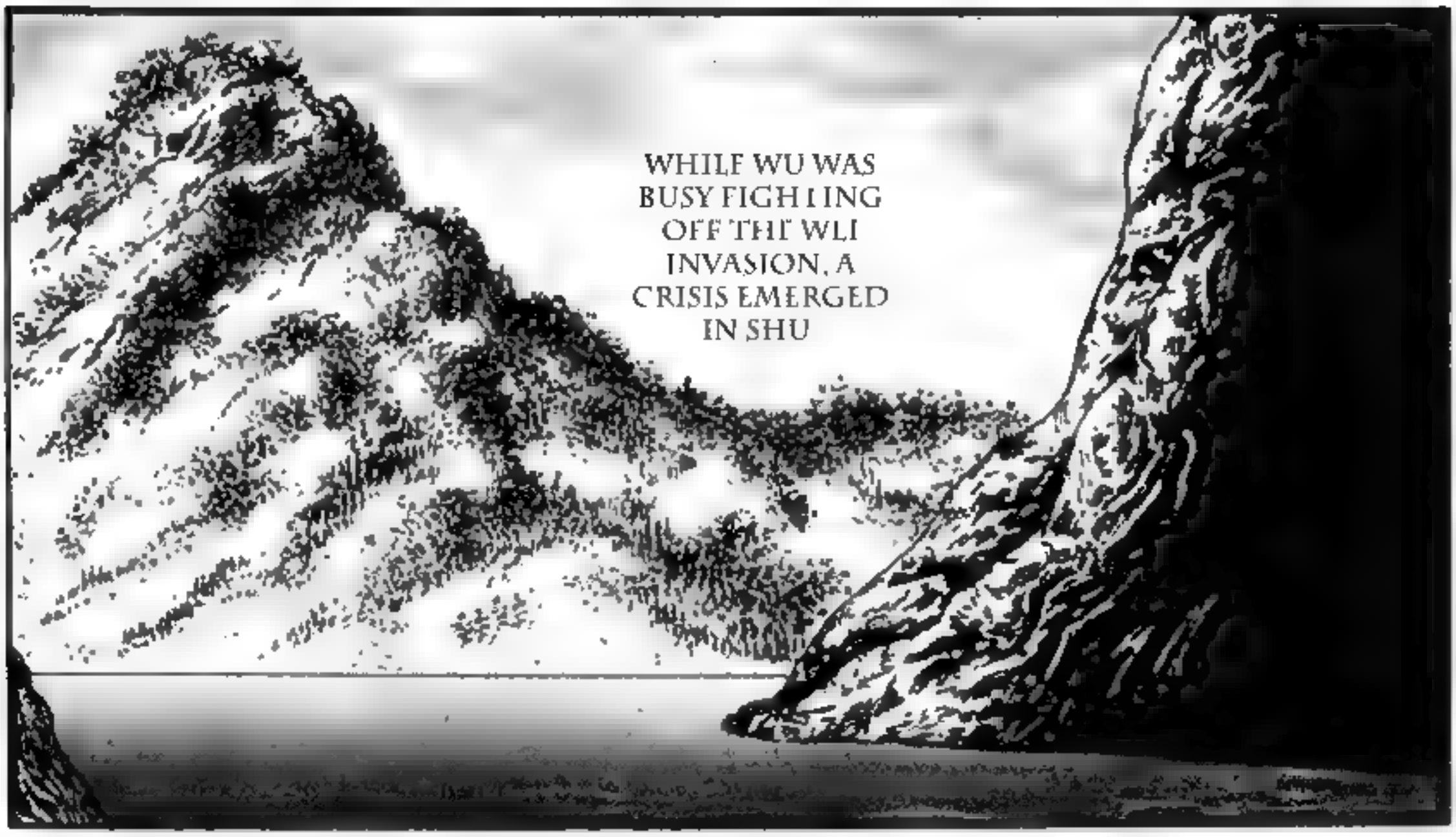

IT WAS A PAINFUL DEFEAT FOR WEI. ITS FLEET WAS BURNT AND OVER HALF OF ITS ARMY WERE KILLED. ALTHOUGH CAO PI BARELY ESCAPED WITH HIS LIFE. MANY TALENTED OFFICERS AND GENERALS DID NOT, MOST NOTABLY ZHANG LIAO, WHO LATER DIED FROM THE ARROW WOUND TO HIS GROIN

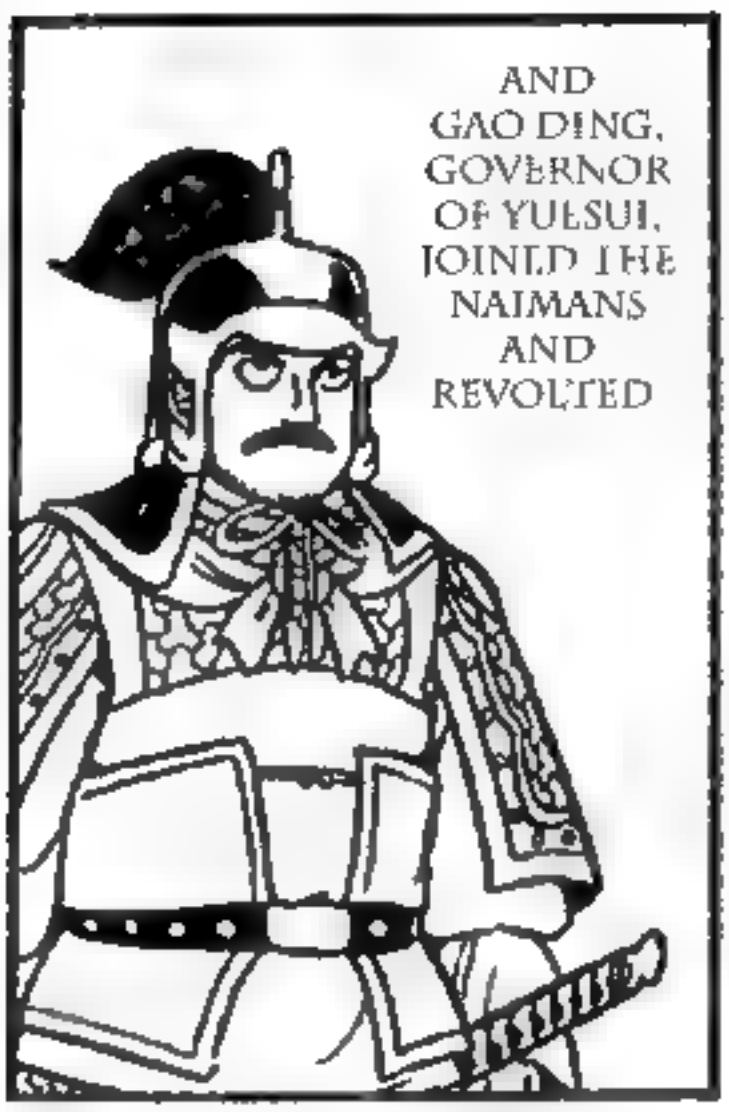
IT WAS
ANOTHER
DEFEAT ON THE
LEVEL OF THE
WEI DISASTER
AT RED CLIFFS

SUN QUAN WAS OVERJOYED UPON HEARING THE GOOD NEWS.


AND LAVISHLY REWARDED XU SHENG, SUN SHAO AND DING FENG

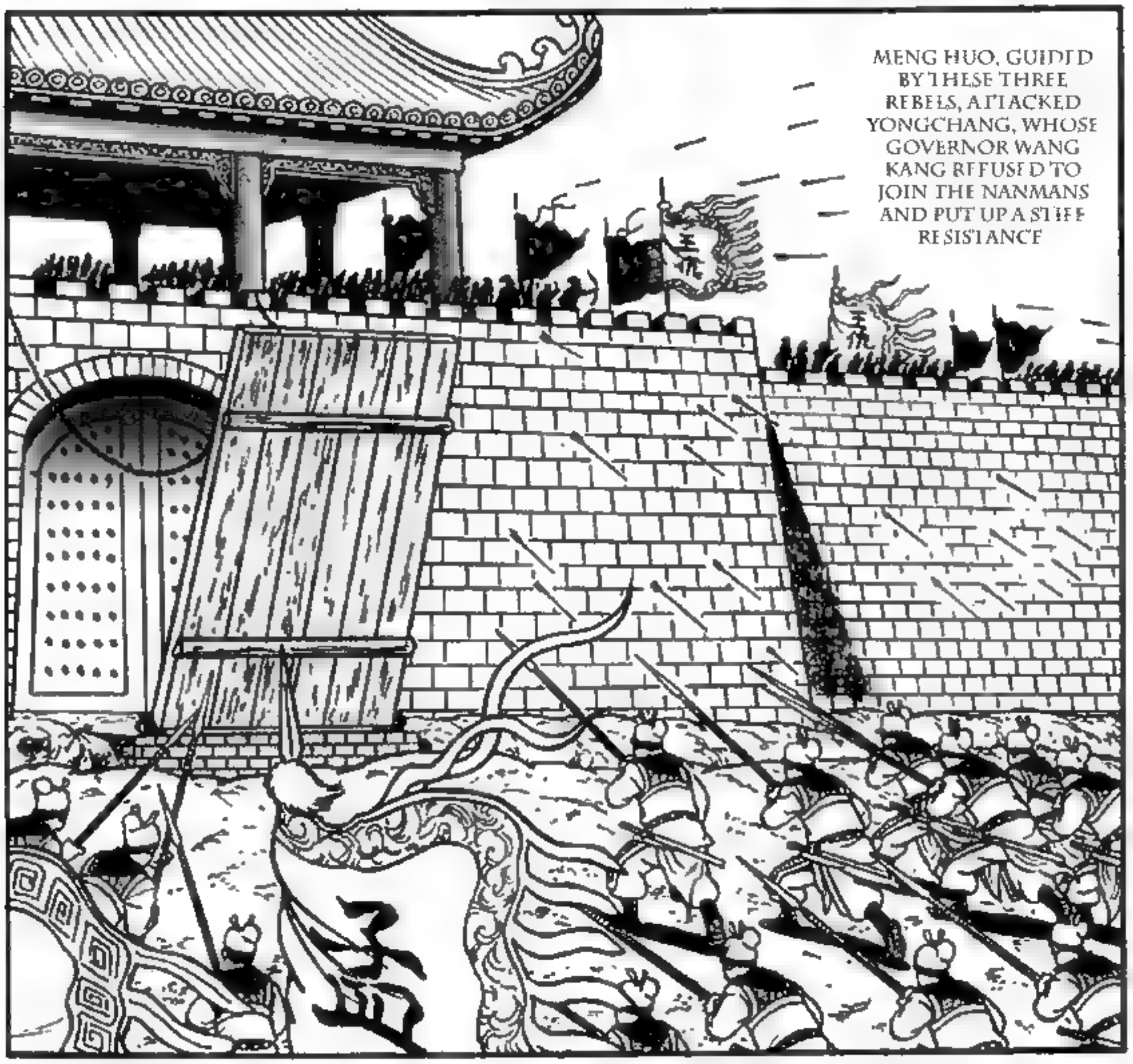
REVOLT OF YIZHOU




AND
GAO DING,
GOVERNOR
OF YULSUI,
JOINED THE
NAIMANS
AND
REVOLTED

ZHU BAO,
GOVERNOR
OF ZANGGE,

YONG KAI,
GOVERNOR OF
JIANNING,


MENG HUO, GUIDED
BY THESE THREE
REBELS, ATTACKED
YONGCHANG, WHOSE
GOVERNOR WANG
KANG REFUSED TO
JOIN THE NANMANS
AND PUT UP A STIFF
RESISTANCE

趙

趙

YES, IN SOUTHERN YIZHOU ALREADY, THE GOVERNORS OF THREE COMMANDERIES HAVE JOINED THE NANMANS AND THEY ARE CURRENTLY BESIEGING YONGCHANG.

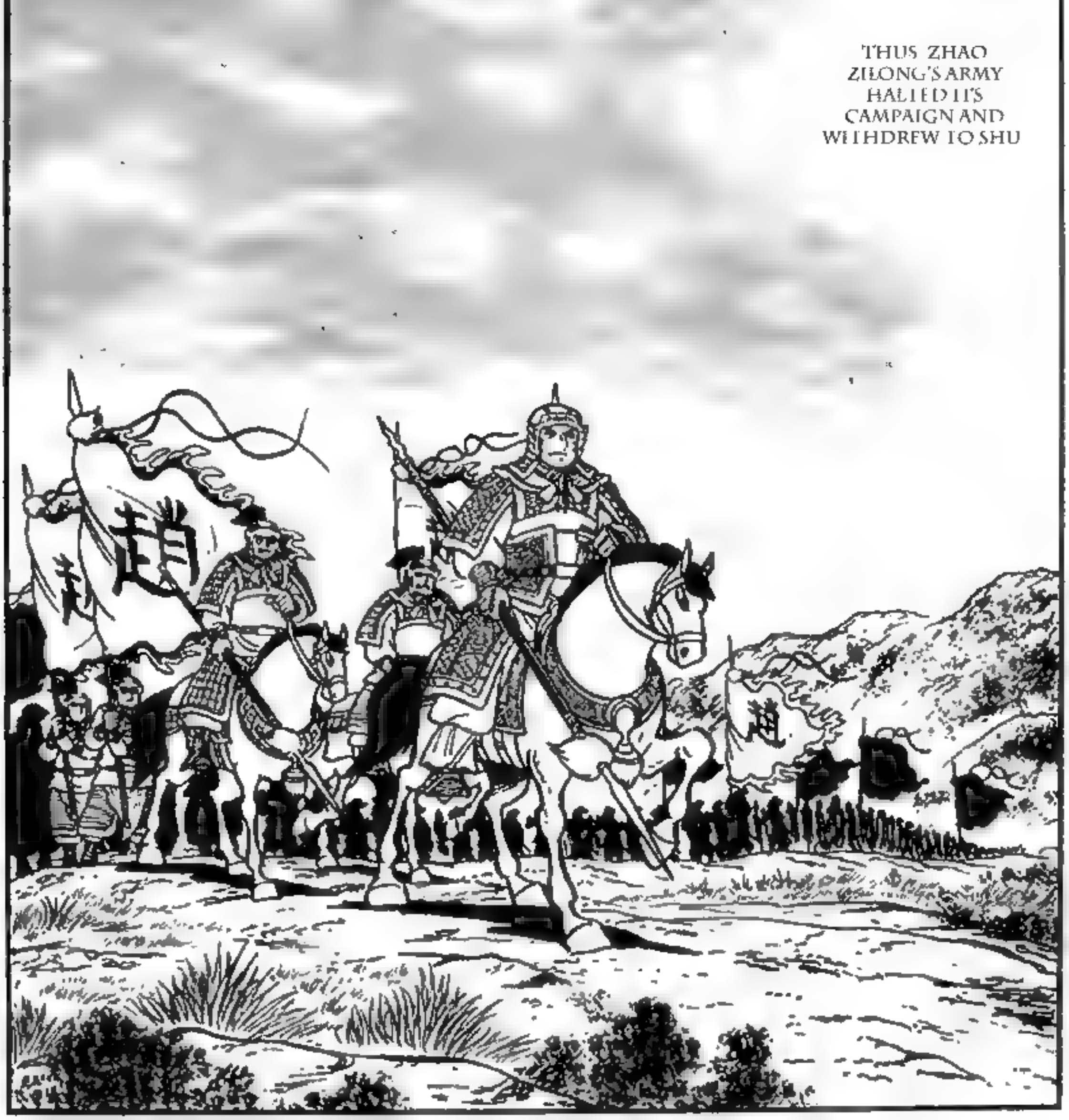
A REVOLT!?

UNDERSTOOD. I SHALL RETURN WITH HASTE.

YES, SIR.

THAT IS WHY I HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO WITHDRAW?

THUS ZHAO ZILONG'S ARMY HALTED ITS CAMPAIGN AND WITHDREW TO SHU



YES, THE UNRULY NANMANS MUST BE BROUGHT UNDER YOUR MAJESTY'S AUTHORITY FOR GOOD, OR THEY WILL CONTINUALLY THREATEN OUR SOUTHERN REGIONS.

YOU WISH TO PERSONALLY COMMAND OUR ARMIES TO SUBJUGATE THE NAIMAN TRIBES?

BUT WHAT IF WEI OR WU WERE TO ATTACK IN YOUR ABSENCE?

I REQUEST A FORCE OF 500,000 FOR THIS TASK.

HAVING BEEN DEFEATED SO THOROUGHLY BY WU RECENTLY, CAO PI WILL DARE NOT THINK OF CONQUEST ANYTIME SOON. IN THE UNLIKELY CASE OF A WEI ATTACK, YOUR MAJESTY STILL HAS MA CHAO DEFENDING THE PASSES BETWEEN WEI AND HANZHONG.

AND IF WEI ARMIES WERE TO INVADE?

NO SUCH WORRIES ARE NECESSARY. WE HAVE JUST SIGNED AN ALLIANCE WITH WU. EVEN IF THEY WERE TO TURN ON US, LI YAN STATIONED AT BAIDICHENG WILL BE MORE THAN ABLE TO DEFEND AGAINST EVEN LU XUN.

THANK YOU.

SO THERE REALLY ISN'T ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...? AS I AM STILL YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED, I WILL TRUST YOUR DECISION THEN, CHANCELLOR.

I WILL ALSO LEAVE GUAN XING AND ZHANG BAO HERE TO COMMAND OUR RESERVE ARMIES TO QUELL ANY TROUBLE THAT MIGHT POP UP.

THE NANMAN LANDS ARE REMOTE AND FULL OF TROPICAL DISEASES. I DO NOT THINK IT IS WISE FOR A CHANCELLOR, WHOSE ROLE IS SO IMPORTANT TO OUR EMPIRE'S GOVERNANCE, TO GO OFF ON SUCH A FAR-FLUNG CAMPAIGN.

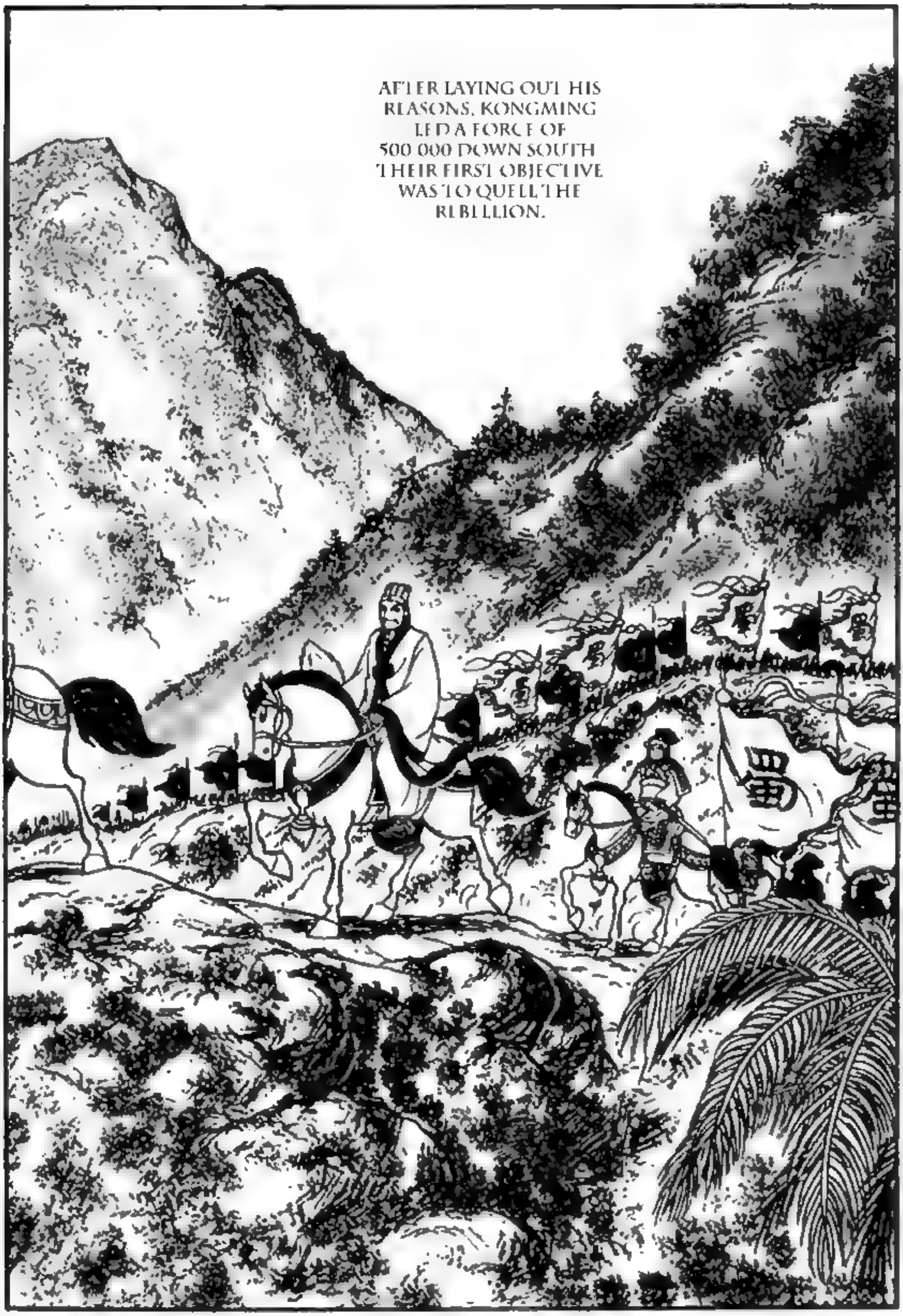
I'M AFRAID I MUST OBJECT, SIR.

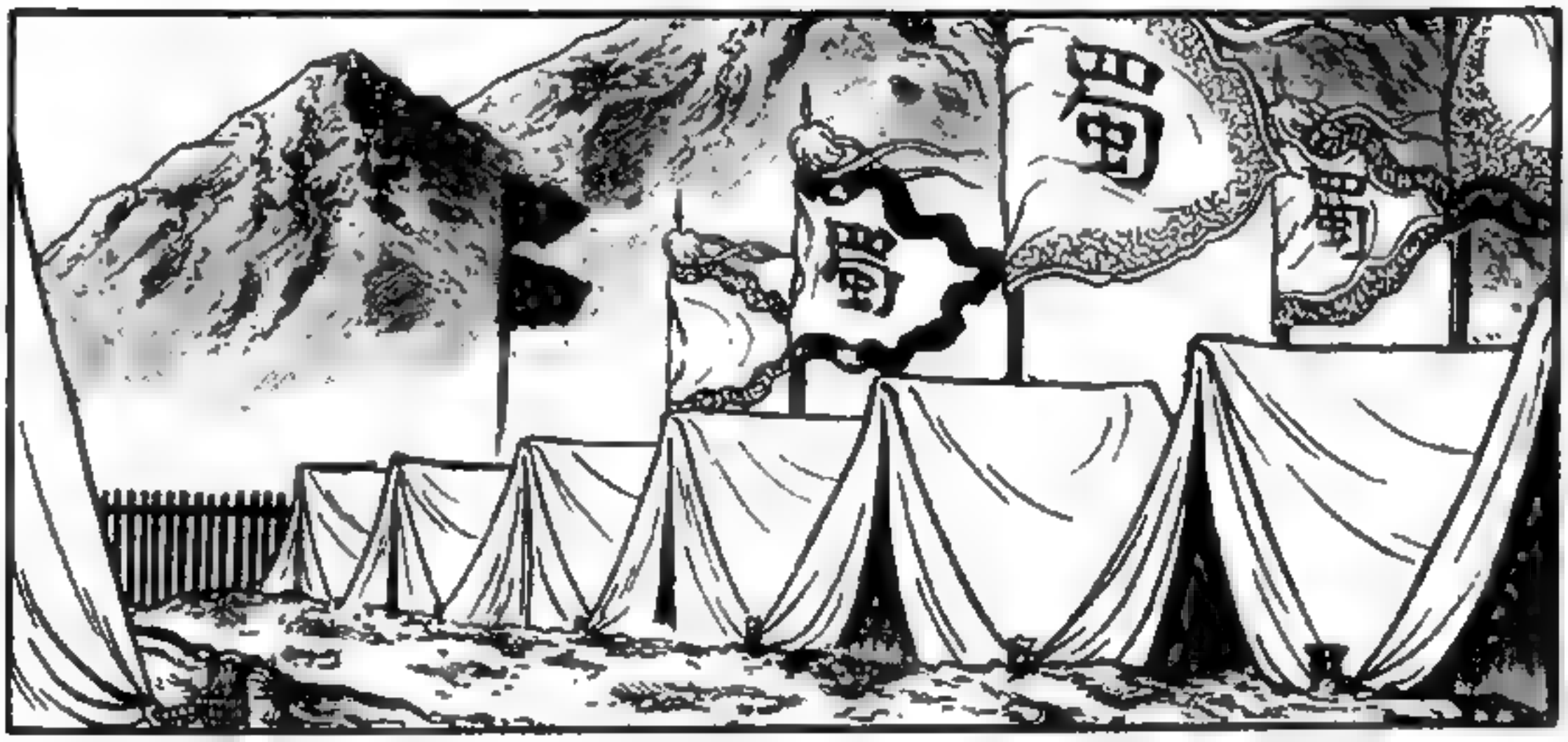
TRUE, THE REVOLT IS OF LITTLE CONCERN, BUT THE NANMAN PROBLEM SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. THE NANMAN TRIBES, SO FAR REMOVED FROM OUR CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION, ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH OUR CONCEPTIONS OF STATEHOOD. THEY WILL NOT ACCEPT A FOREIGN EMPEROR EASILY. BRINGING THEM INTO LINE WILL REQUIRE A TACTFUL APPROACH. ONE MUST KNOW WHEN TO USE FORCE AND WHEN TO APPLY LENIENCY, WHICH IS WHY I MUST PERSONALLY LEAD THIS CAMPAIGN.

THE LIKES OF YONG KAI ARE NOTHING TO FEAR. THE REBELLION IN YIZHOU CAN EASILY BE SQUASHED WITH ONE SKILLED GENERAL.

THE CURRENT REVOLT IN YIZHOU WAS INSTIGATED BY THE NANMANS. IF THE NAIMANS DO NOT BECOME LOYAL SUBJECTS OF SHU, WHO KNOWS HOW MANY MORE REVOLTS THEY WILL FUEL IN THE FUTURE?

AFTER LAYING OUT HIS REASONS, KONGMING LED A FORCE OF 500 000 DOWN SOUTH. THEIR FIRST OBJECTIVE WAS TO QUELL THE REBELLION.

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蜀
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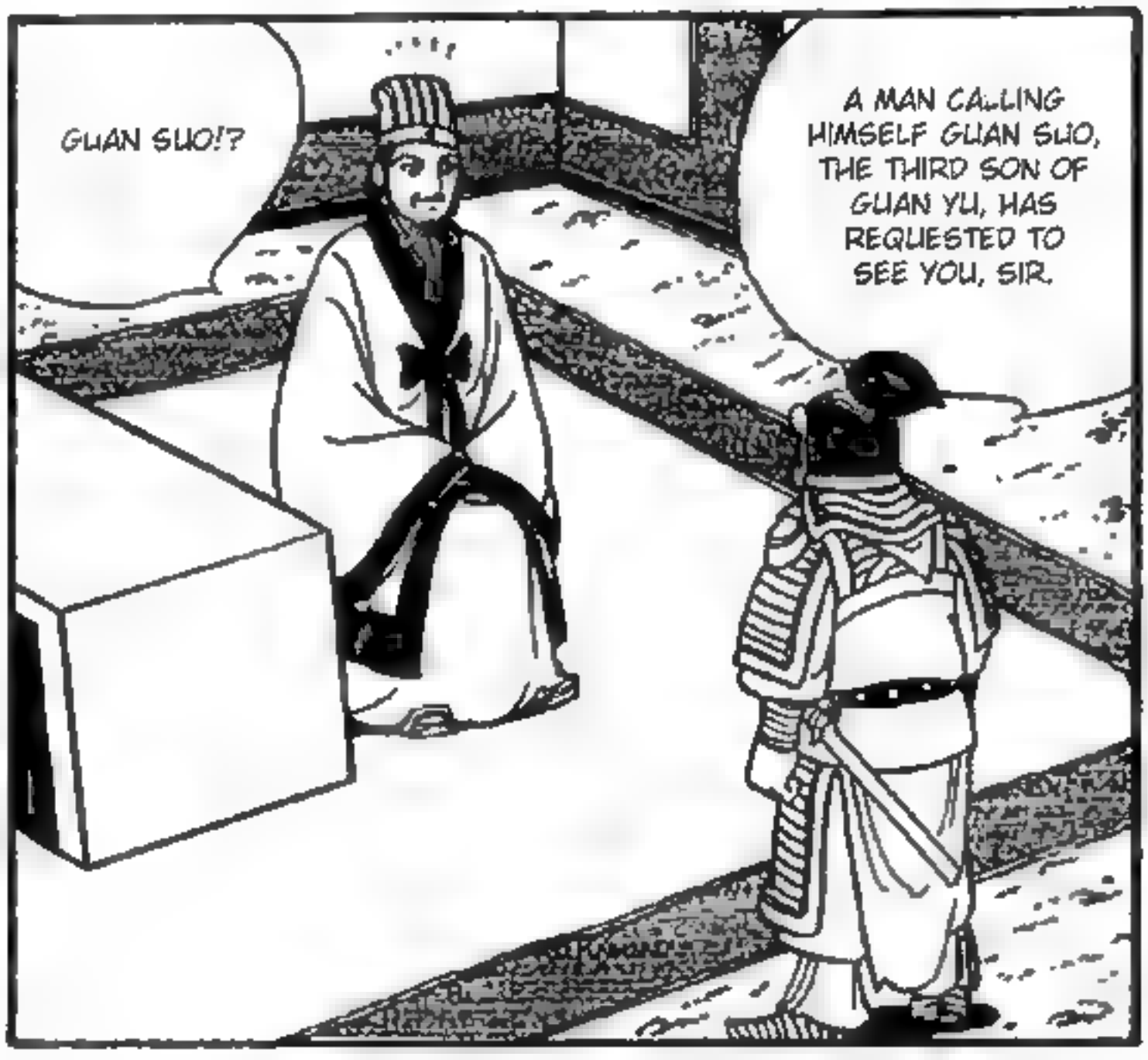
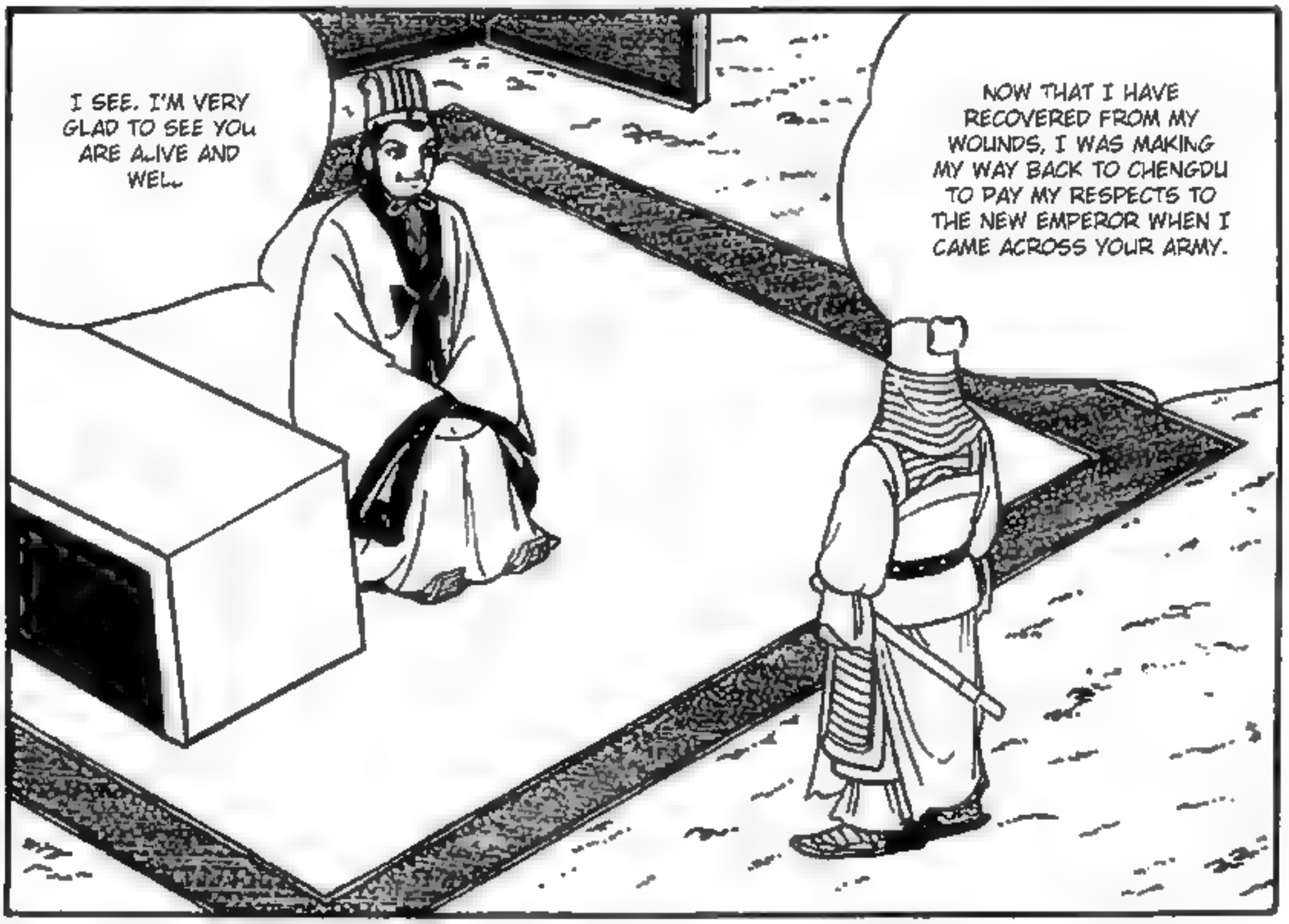
I HEARD HE HAD PERISHED ALONGSIDE HIS FATHER...


GUAN SUO!?
A MAN CALLING HIMSELF GUAN SUO, THE THIRD SON OF GUAN YU, HAS REQUESTED TO SEE YOU, SIR.

YES, SIR.
IN ANY CASE, LET HIM IN.

AH, YOU REALLY ARE GUAN SUO! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL THIS TIME?

WHEN JINGZHOU FELL, I WAS GRAVELY INJURED AND THE BAO FAMILY SHE-TERED ME FROM DANGER.

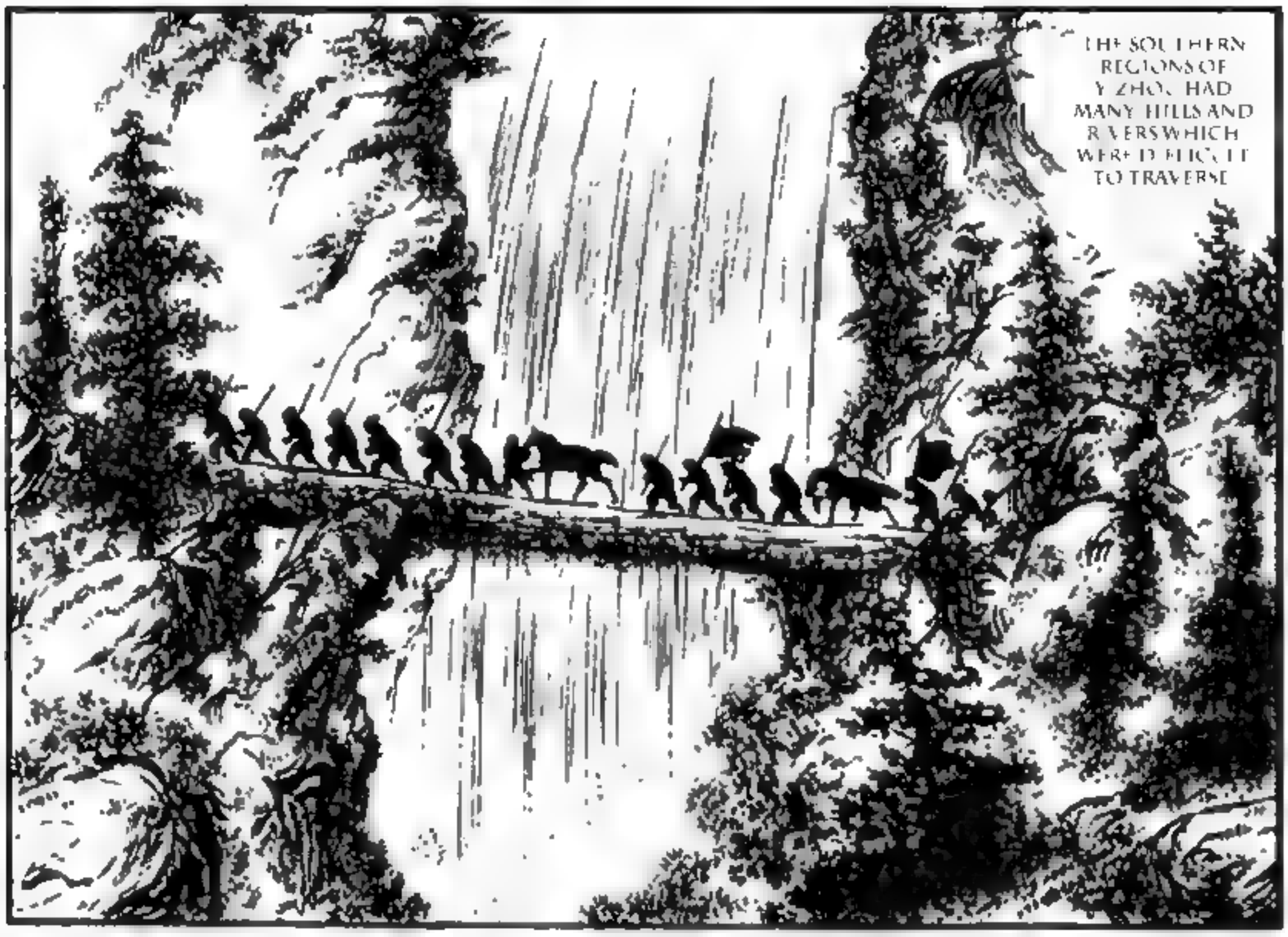

I SEE. I'M VERY GLAD TO SEE YOU ARE ALIVE AND WEL.
NOW THAT I HAVE RECOVERED FROM MY WOUNDS, I WAS MAKING MY WAY BACK TO CHENGDU TO PAY MY RESPECTS TO THE NEW EMPEROR WHEN I CAME ACROSS YOUR ARMY.

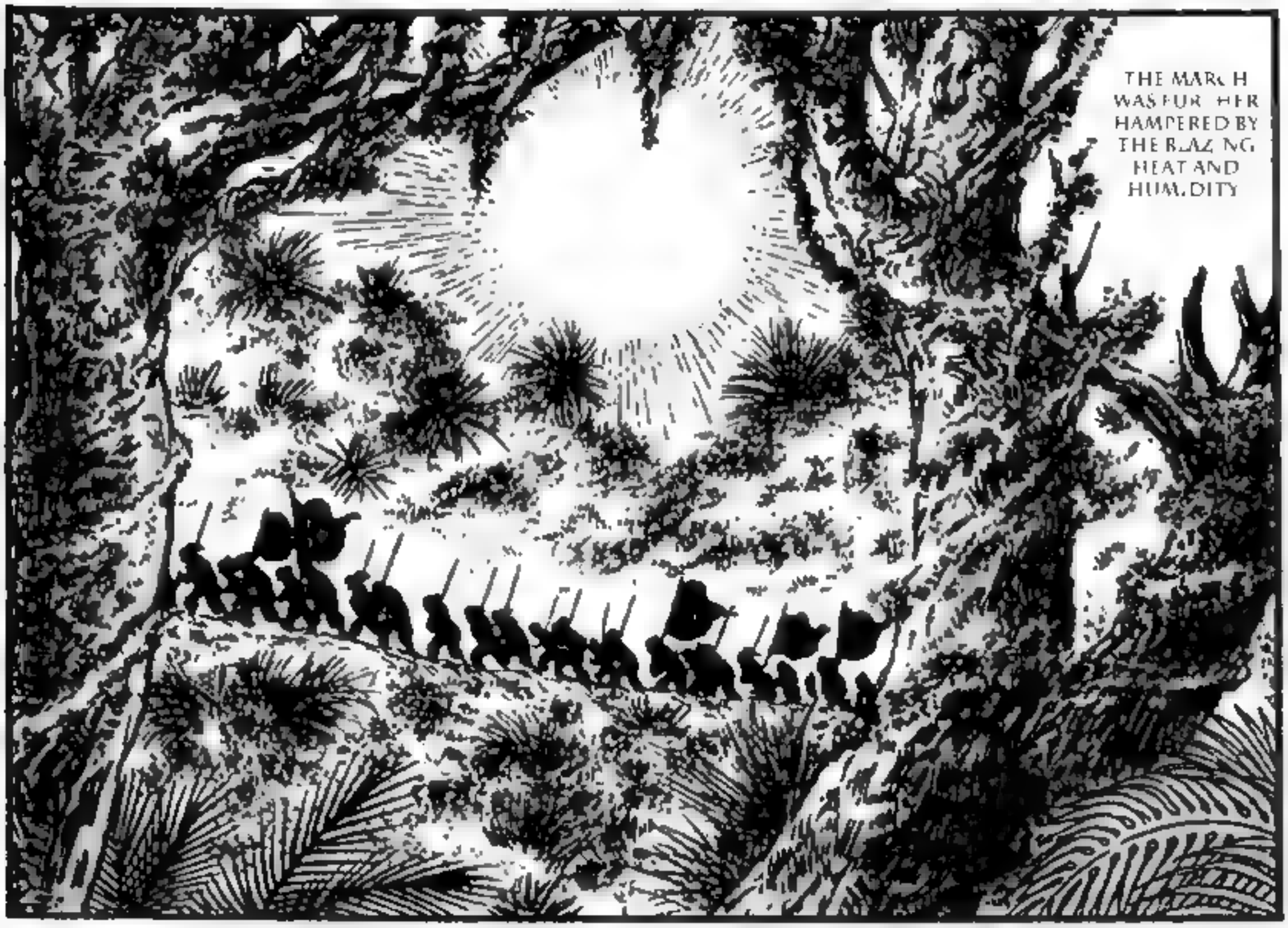
THANK YOU, CHANCELLOR.

IF YOU WISH TO BE OF SERVICE, THEN I WILL PLACE YOU IN THE VANGUARD OF MY ARMY.

TO SEE A MAN I THOUGHT DEAD COME BACK ALIVE... THIS IS A GOOD SIGN FROM THE HEAVENS THAT MY CAMPAIGN IS OFF TO A GOOD START.

WITH GUAN SUO'S RETURN THE ARMY MARCHED SOUTH


THE SOUTHERN
REGIONS OF
YAZHOU HAD
MANY HILLS AND
RIVERS WHICH
WERE DIFFICULT
TO TRAVERSE


THE MARCH
WAS FURTHER
HAMPERED BY
THE BLAZING
HEAT AND
HUMIDITY

NOW THIS IS SOMETHING. LET'S TEACH THAT COCKY BASTARD A LESSON.

RIGHT

YES, SIR.

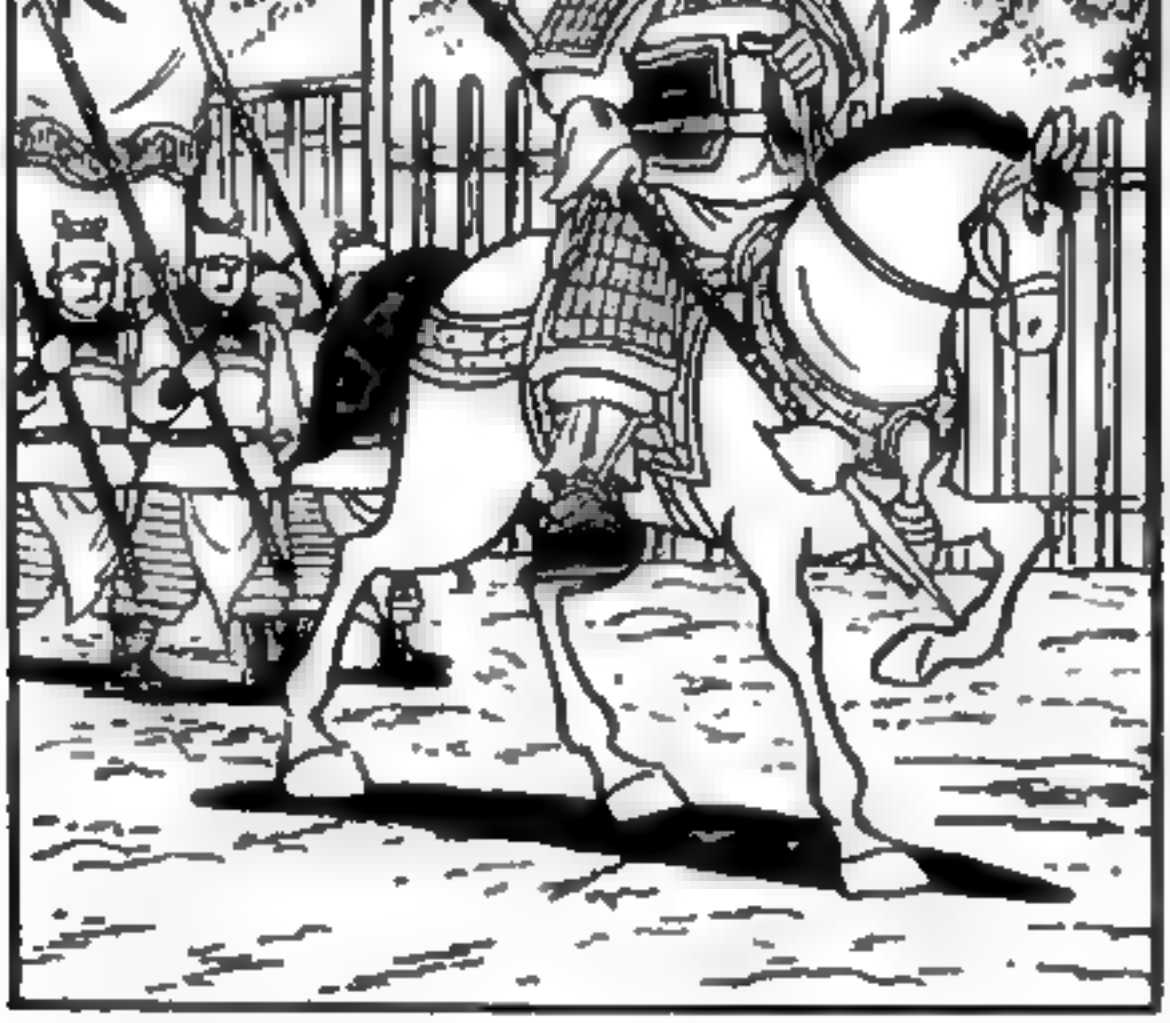
KONGMING HIMSELF IS COMING DOWN WITH AN ARMY OF 500,000?

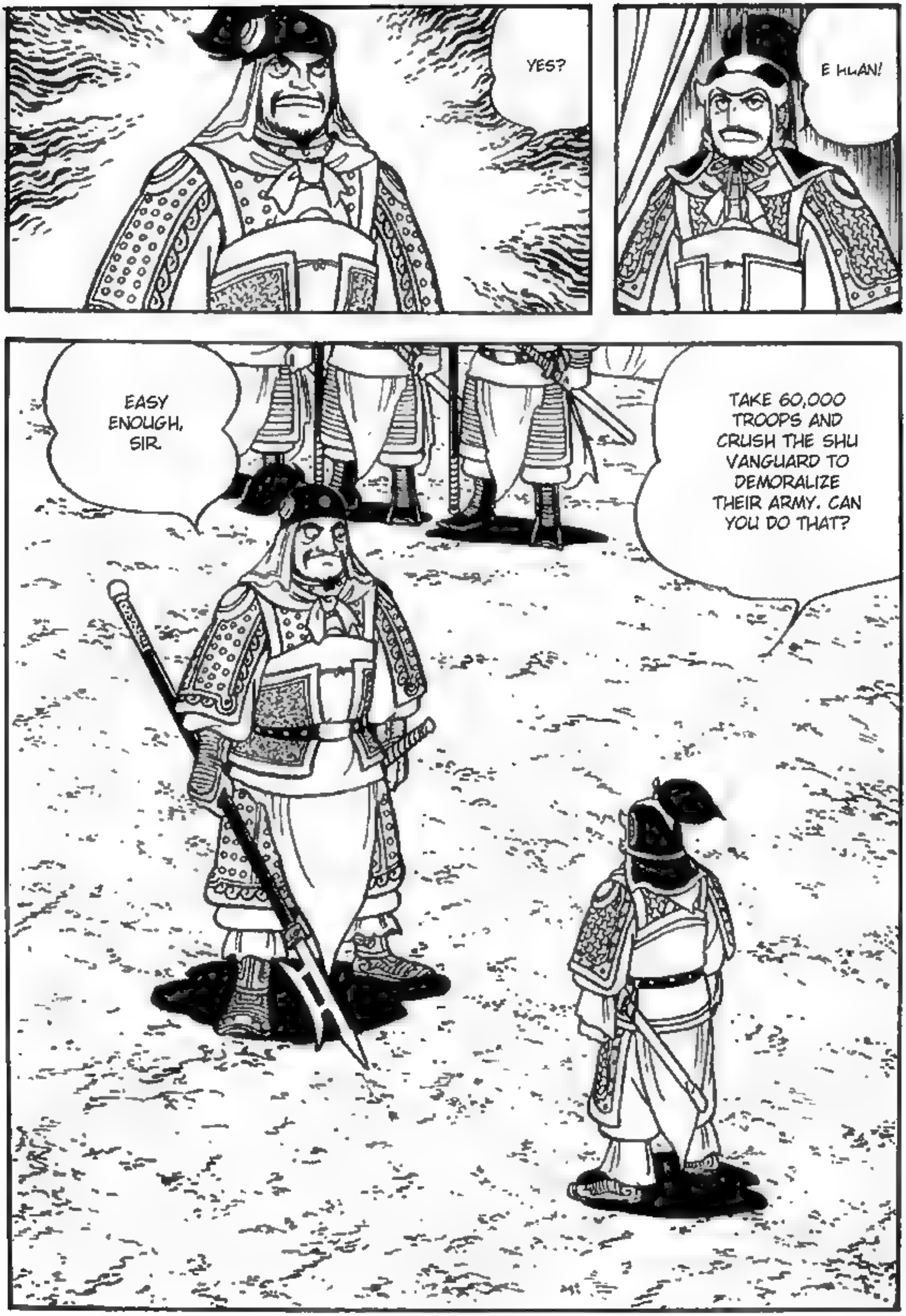
WE'LL CRUSH THEM WITH OUR FAMILIARITY WITH THE HARSH TERRAIN OF THE SOUTH.

WE WILL SPLIT OUR FORCES INTO THREE. GAO DING WILL LEAD THE LEFT WING, ZHU BAO THE RIGHT, AND I'LL TAKE THE CENTER.

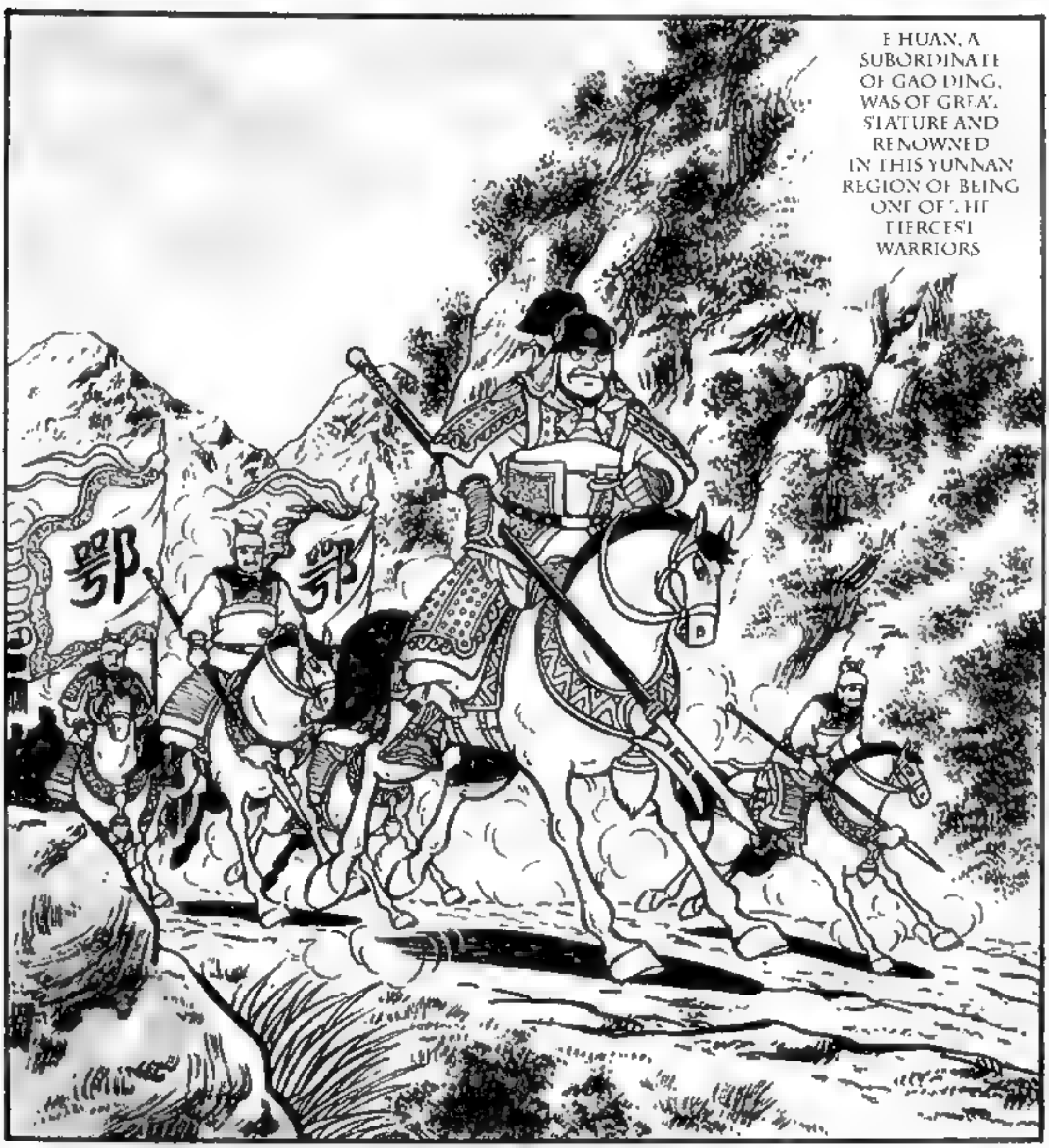
IF WE CAN DESTROY KONGMING'S ARMY, THEN WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO PUSH ALL THE WAY TO CHENGDU AND CONQUER SHU WITH MENG HUO'S HELP!
GOOD, LET'S GET MOVING THEN.

WE'RE MOVING CAMPS! FOLLOW ME, MEN!




YES?
E HUAN!
EASY ENOUGH, SIR.
TAKE 60,000 TROOPS AND CRUSH THE SHU VANGUARD TO DEMORALIZE THEIR ARMY. CAN YOU DO THAT?

MOVE YOUR FEET, MEN!


E HUAN, A SUBORDINATE OF GAO DING, WAS OF GREAT STATURE AND RENOWNED IN THIS YUNNAN REGION OF BEING ONE OF THE FIERCEST WARRIORS

*FLAG READS WEI YAN (魏延)

SO I MUST CATCH THIS BEAST?
THE CHANCELLOR ASKS YOU TO AVOID A FRONTAL ENGAGEMENT AND INSTEAD USE CUNNING TO TIRE HIM OUT SO THAT HE CAN BE TAKEN ALIVE.

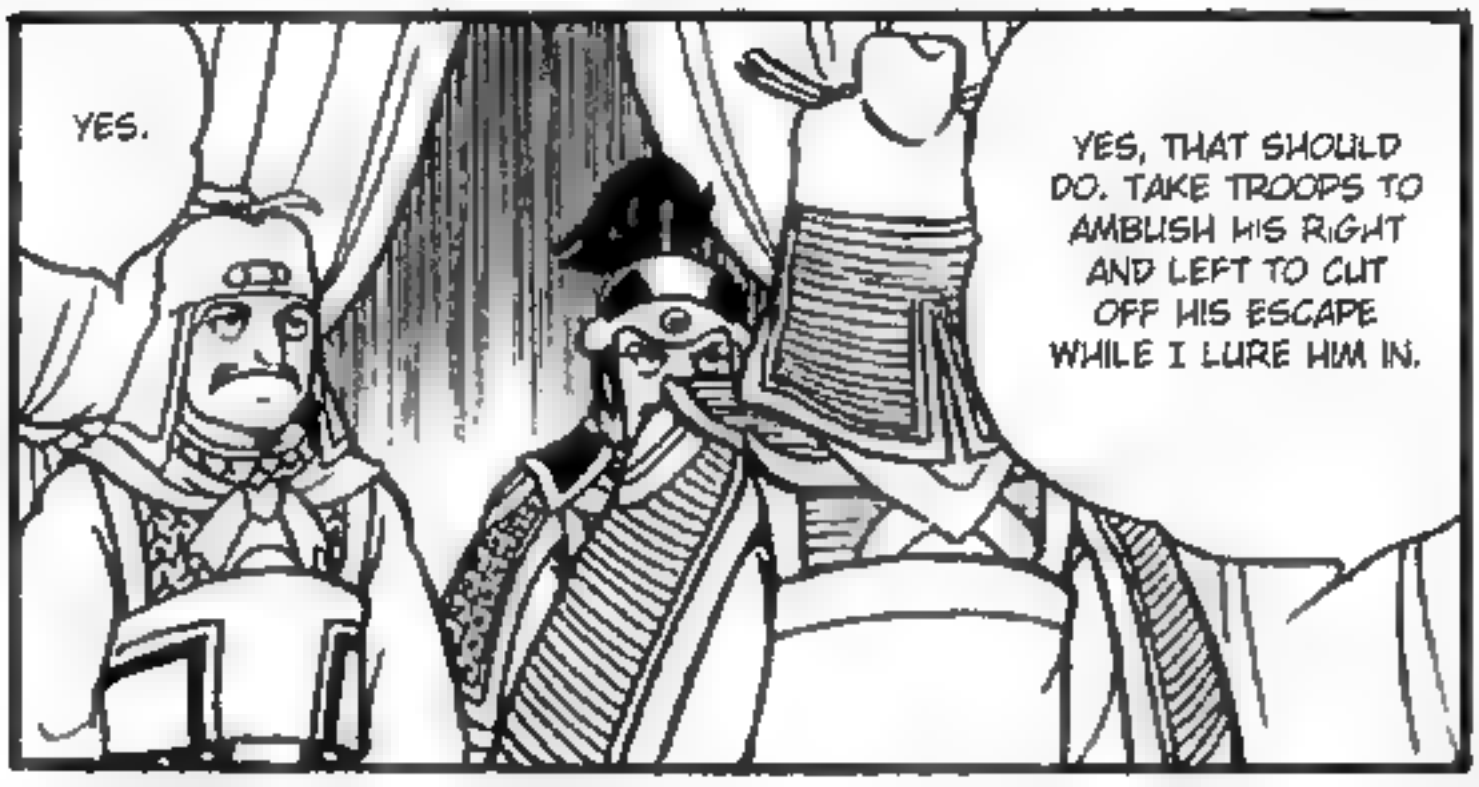
UNDER-
STOOD.

THE CHANCEL-
LOR SEEMS TO
HAVE SOME
PLAN FOR HIM.

HOW
SHOULD
WE GO
ABOUT THIS
THEN?

YES,
SIR.
ZHANG YI,
WANG PING,
YOU HEARD THE
ORDER, RIGHT?

WE SHOULD
CUT OFF HIS
RETREAT ROUTES,
SURROUND HIM,
AND THEN KEEP
HARASSING HIM
UNTIL HE'S
EXHAUSTED.


YES.
YES, THAT SHOULD
DO. TAKE TROOPS TO
AMBUSH HIS RIGHT
AND LEFT TO CUT
OFF HIS ESCAPE
WHILE I LURE HIM IN.

HM...

鏡延

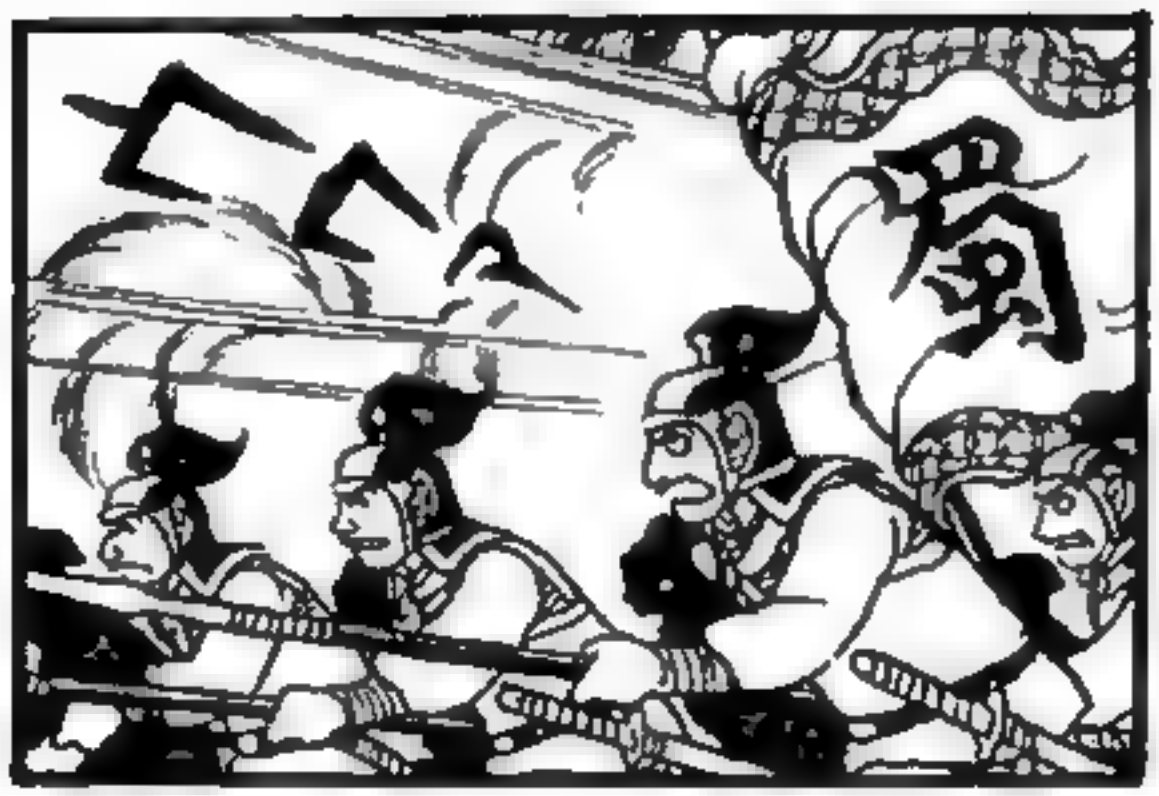
SIR! THE ENEMIES HAVE APPEARED!

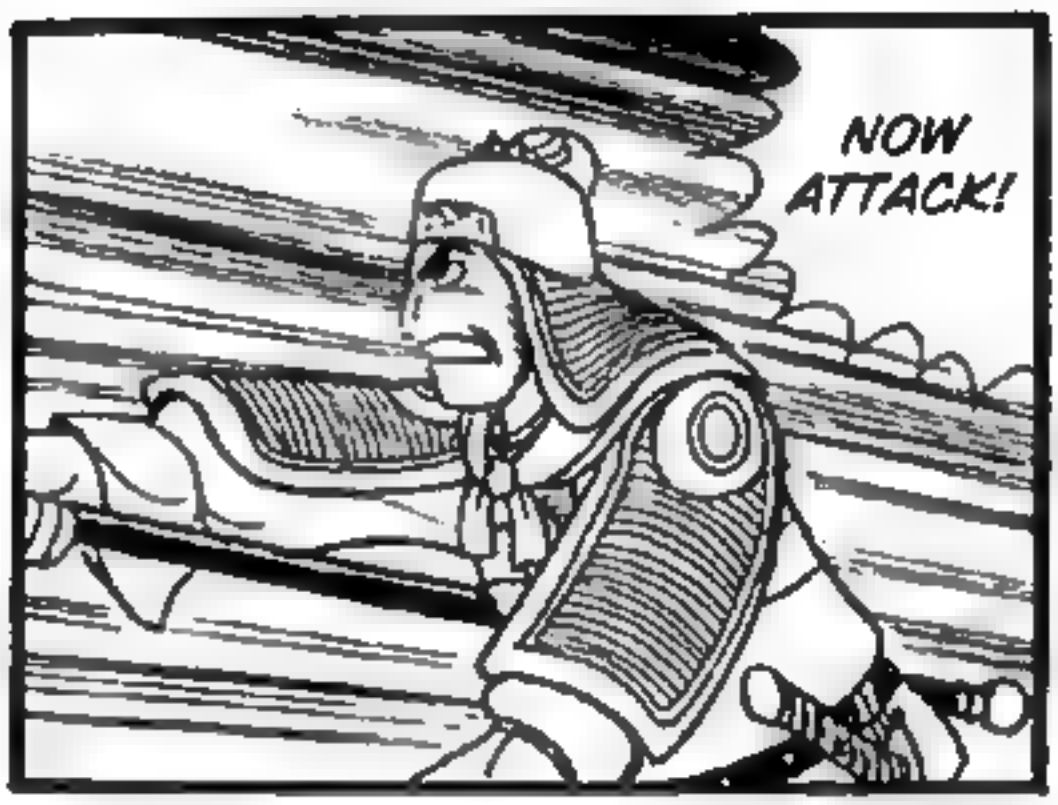
ATTACK!

GREAT, TIME TO TAKE ANOTHER GENERAL'S HEAD.

FOLLOW THE PLAN AND LURE THEM IN!

HERE THEY COME.




NOW
ATTACK!

HAHH!

STOP WASTING MY ENERGY AND BRING OUT YOUR GENERAL!

キキ-!

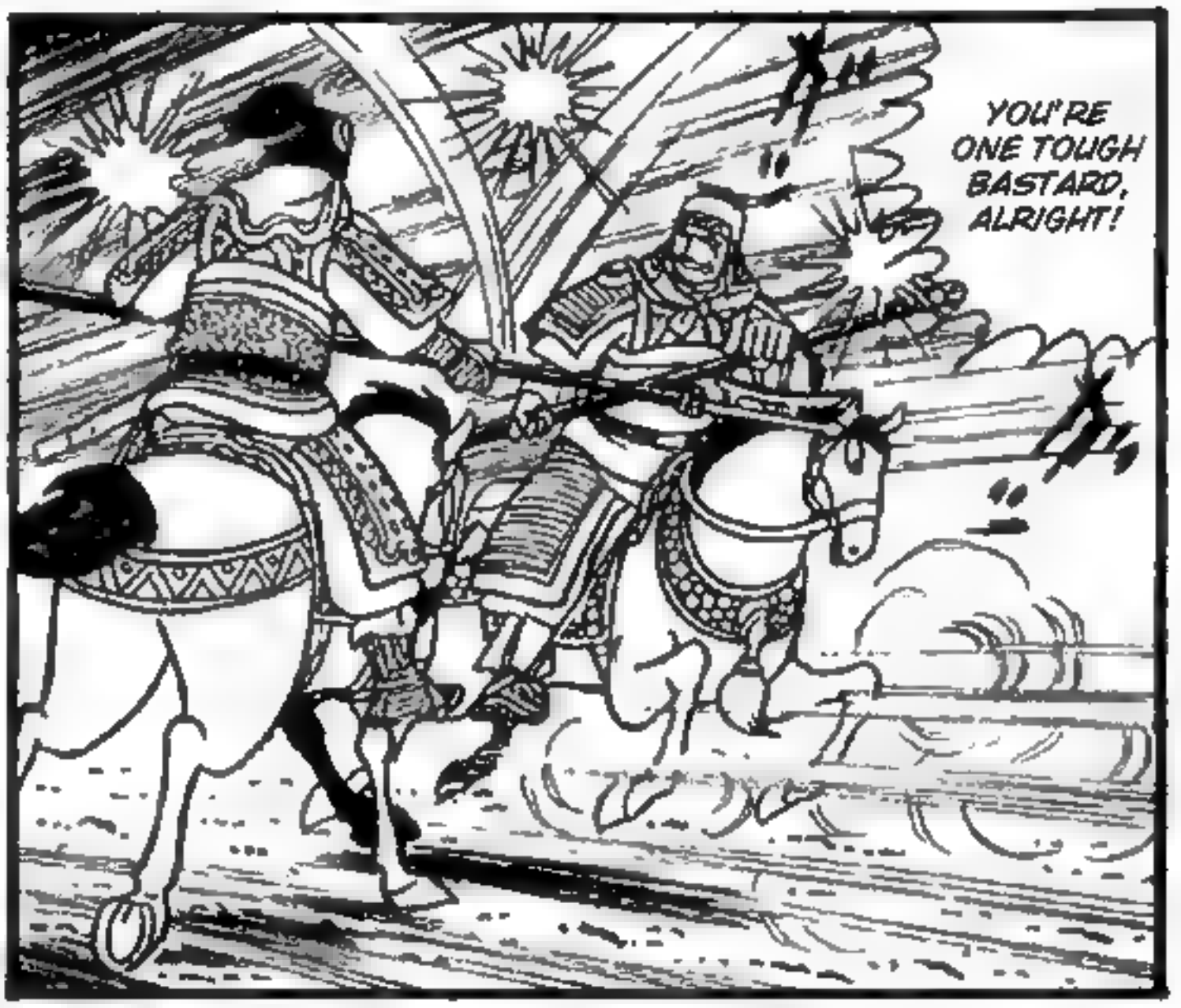
I'LL GLADLY TAKE YOU ON!

I'M RIGHT HERE!

ガ"

ビュッ

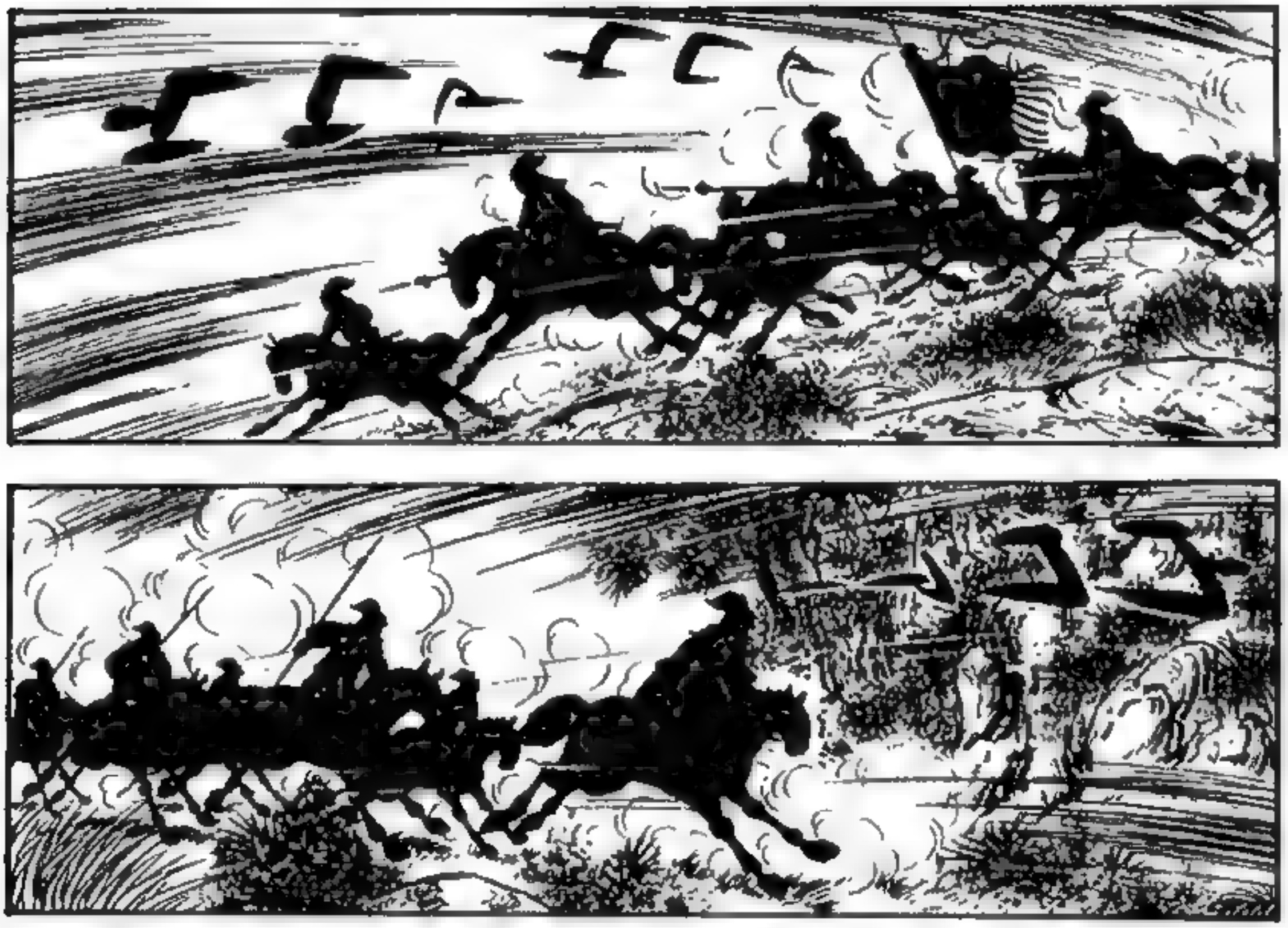
RETREAT!


YOU'RE ONE TOUGH BASTARD, ALRIGHT!

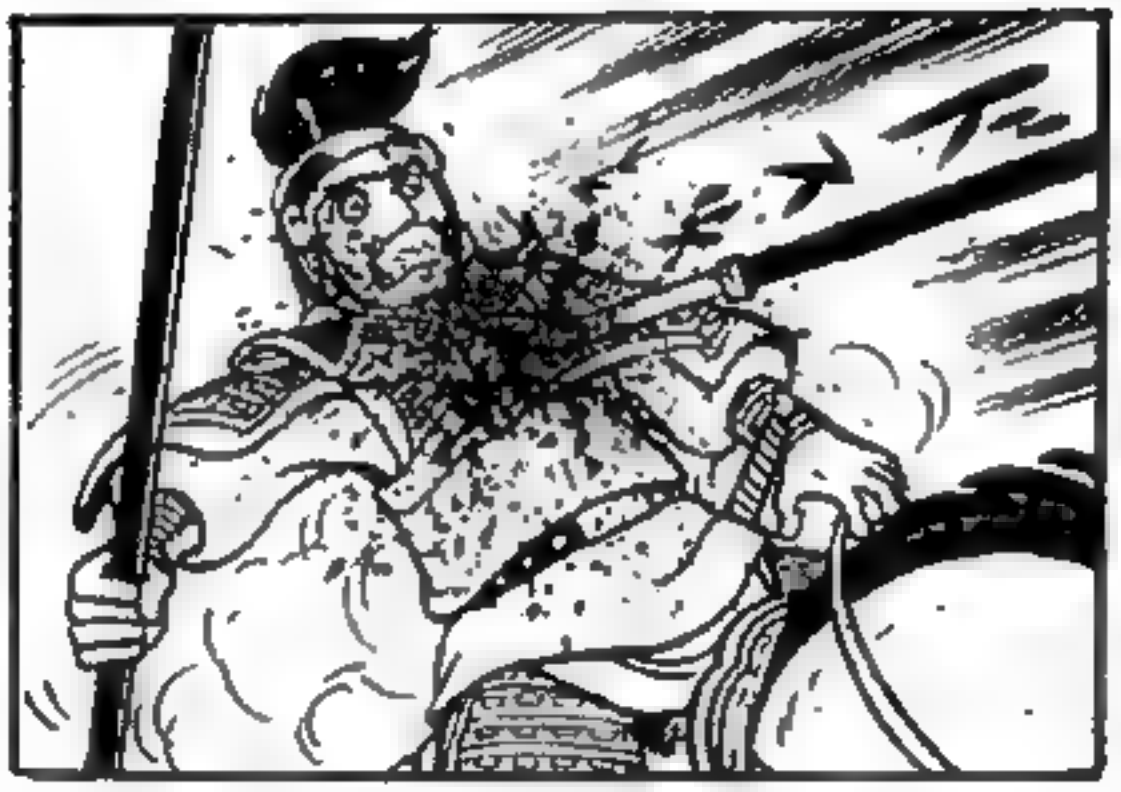
CHASE THEM DOWN!

RUNNING ALREADY?

SIR! THERE ARE ENEMIES TO OUR LEFT AND RIGHT!

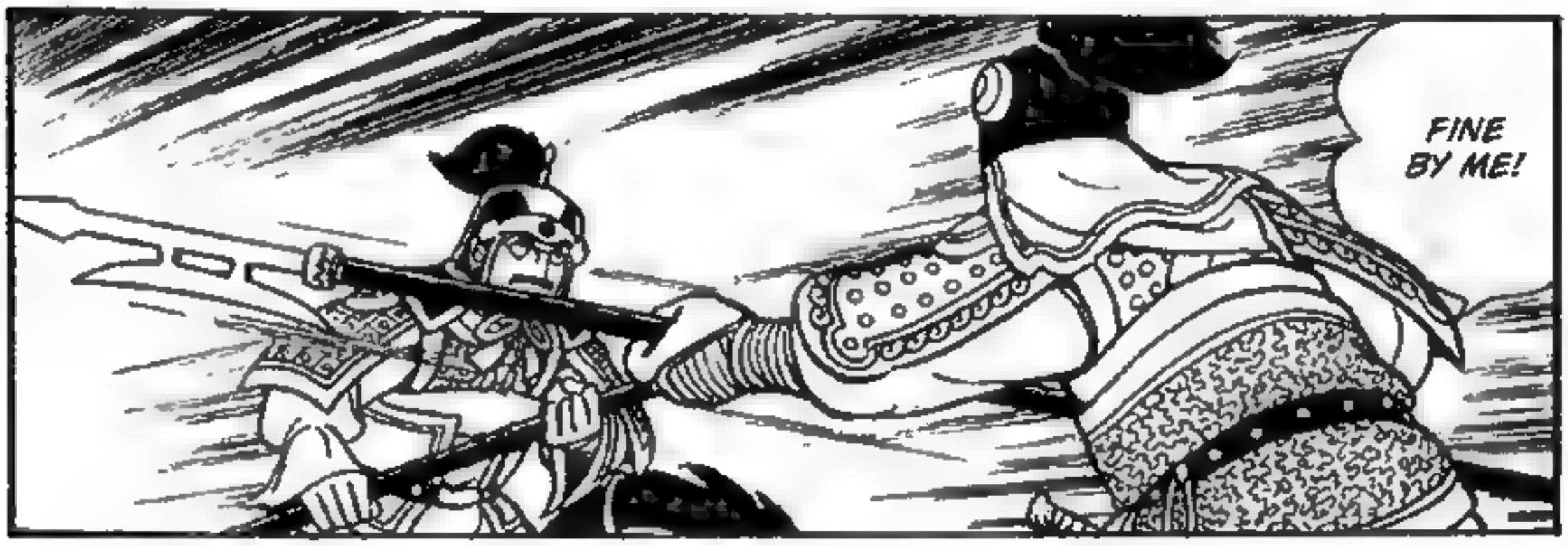


BAH! BEAT THEM OFF!



I, ZHANG YI, WILL TAKE YOU ON!

CAN ANY OF YOU ACTUALLY FIGHT A DAMN!?


FINE BY ME!

DAMN LIL' BUGGERS POPPING UP EVERY-WHERE!

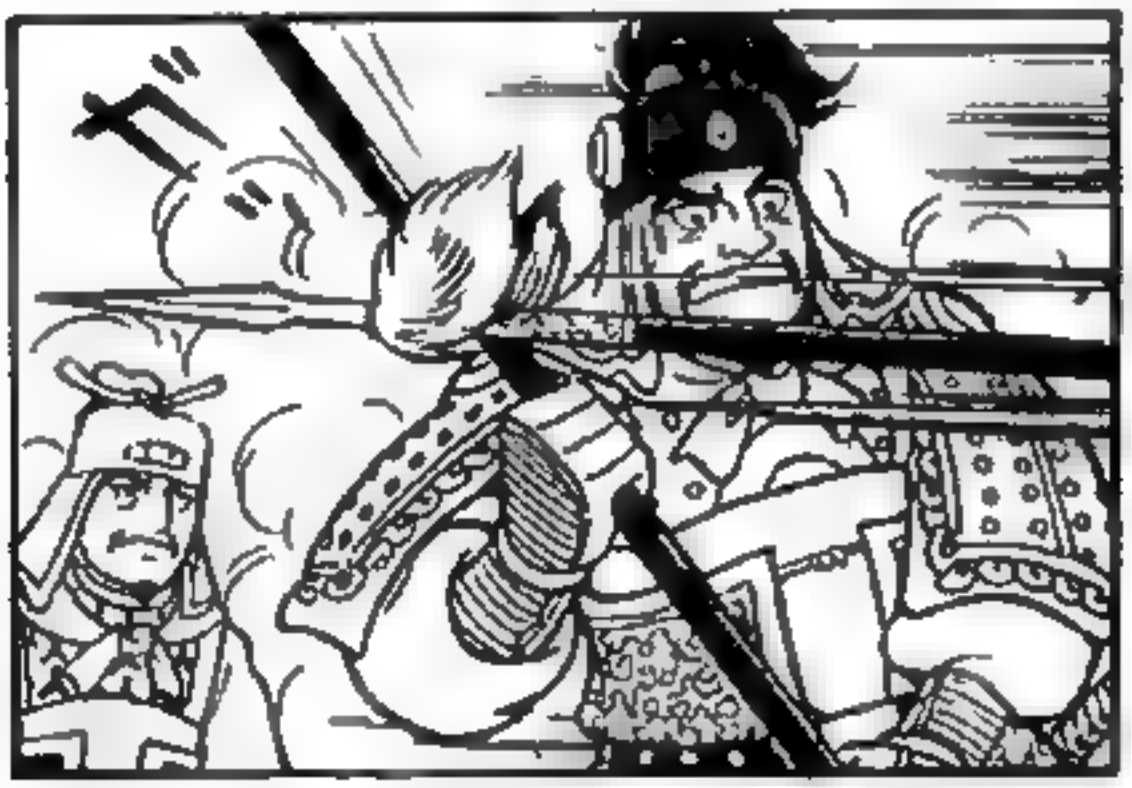
NO, ALLOW ME, WANG PING!

IT'S TIME TO BRING THIS BATTLE TO A CLOSE.

E HUAN HAS BEEN SUCCESS-FULLY ISOLATED FROM MOST OF H S TROOPS, SIR.

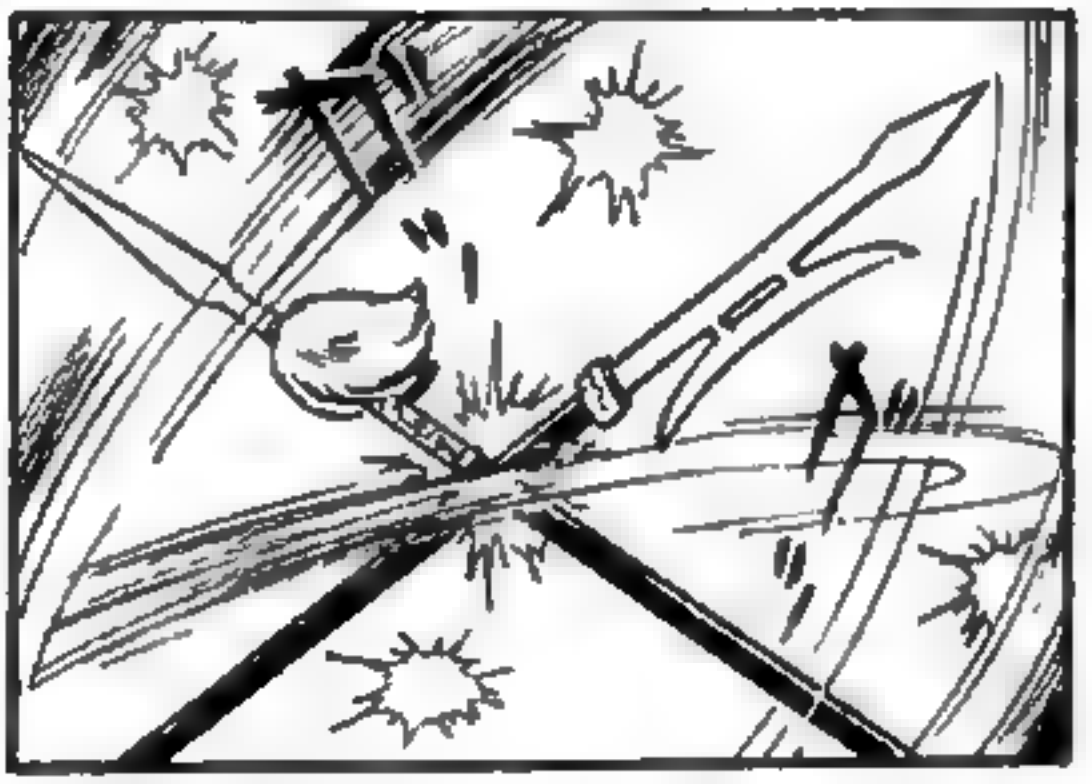
HA, THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR RELYING TOO MUCH ON YOUR FIGHTING SKILLS.

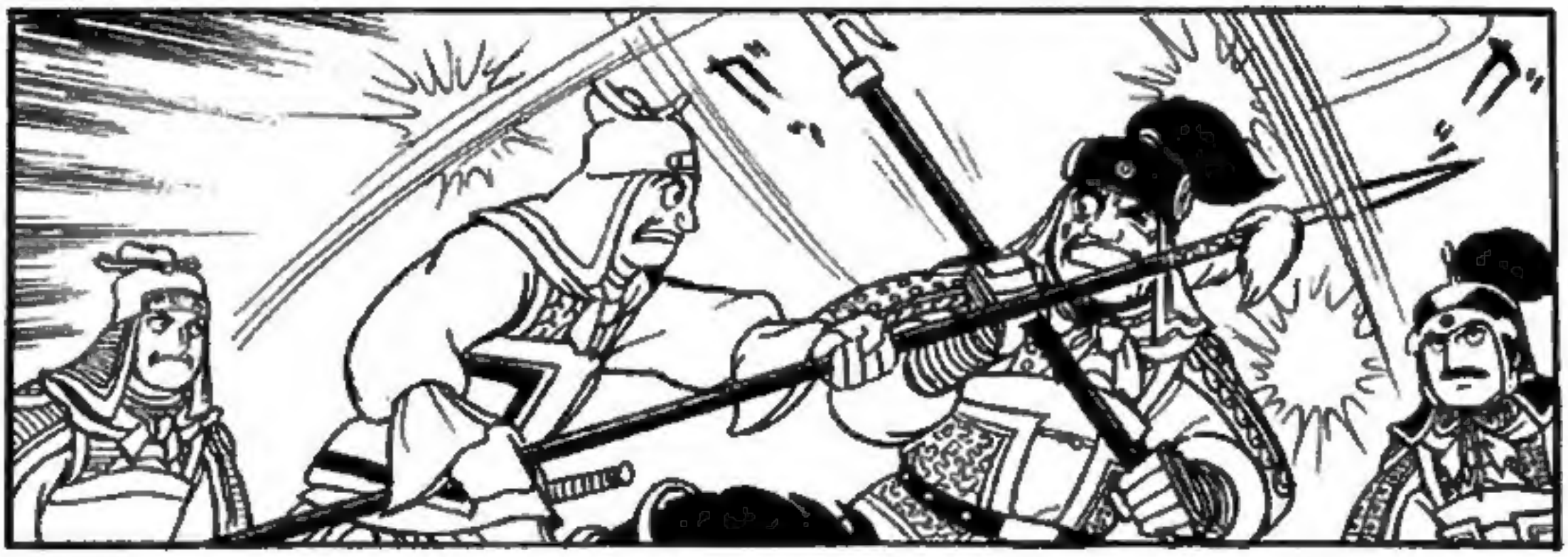
HALT! WEI YAN IS YOUR TRUE OPPONENT!



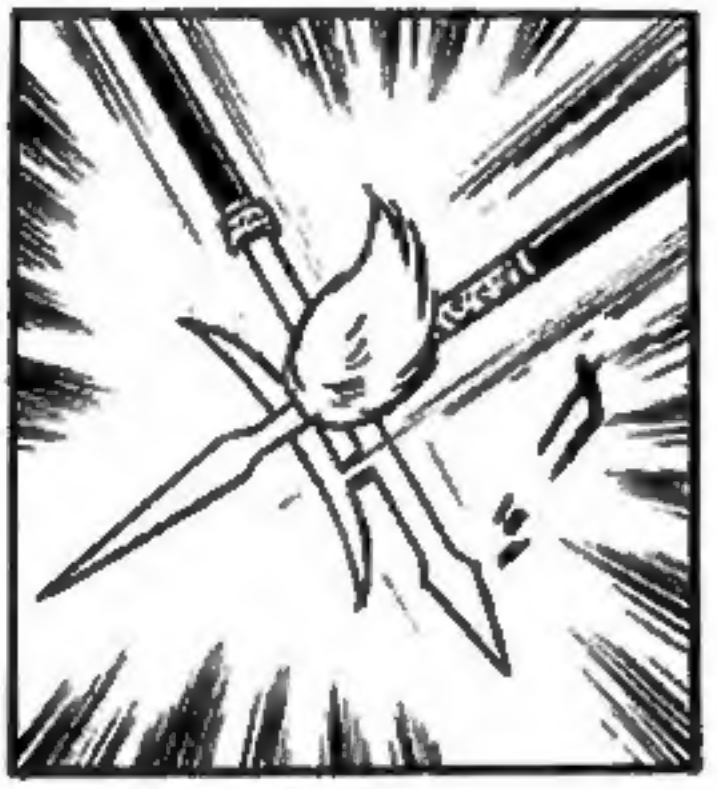
NO,
HE'S
MINE!

NO,
MINE!

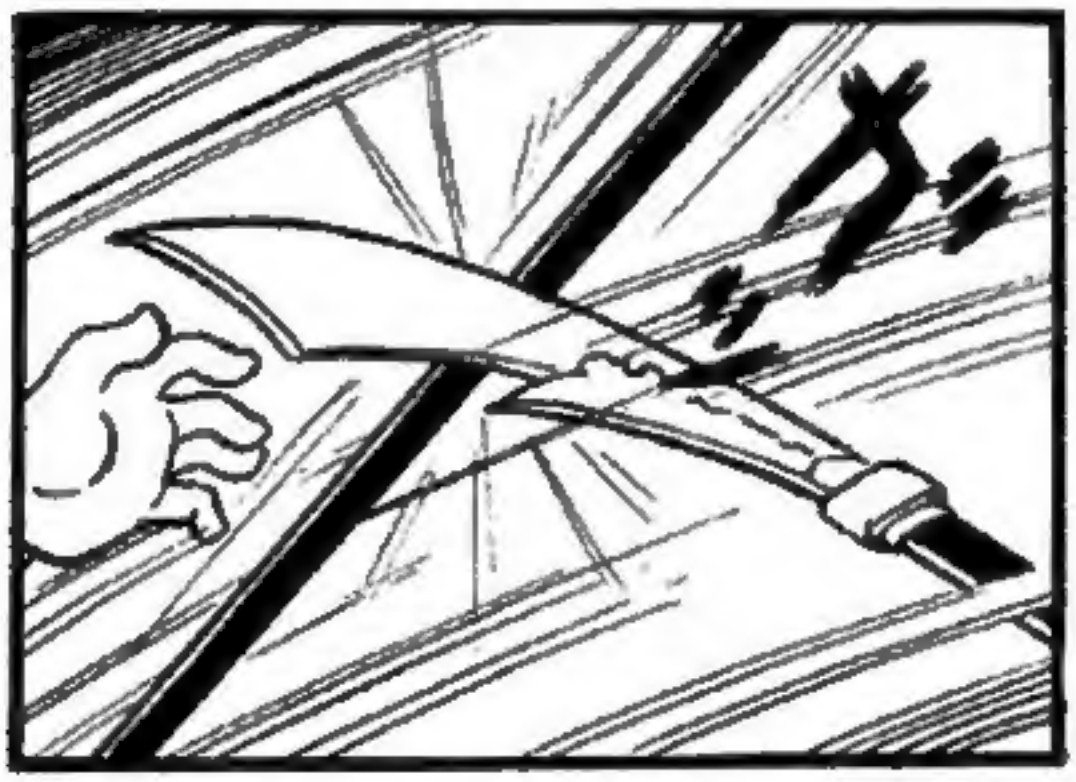




HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

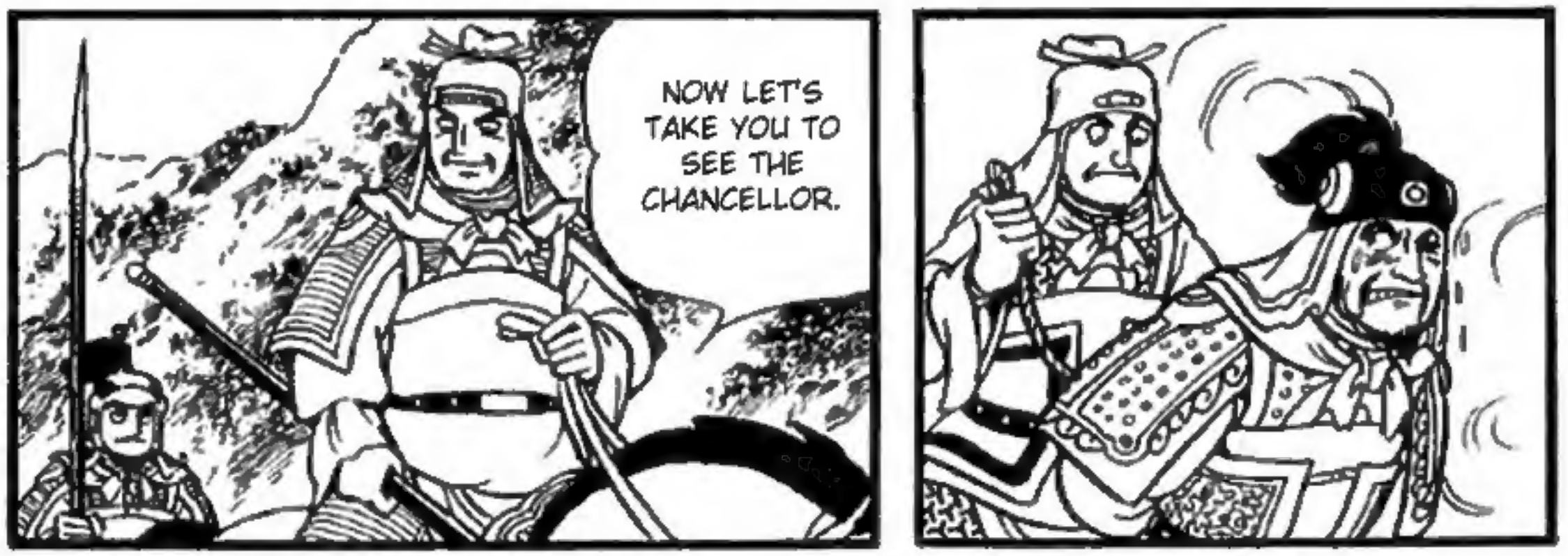


NOW'S MY CHANCE!



NGHH...
GIVE IT UP. YOU'RE OUR CAPTIVE NOW.

AGH-



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横山 光輝

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